

# **THE BOOK OF SAMUEL**

**JOHN SKINNER**

**1925**

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**THE BOOK OF SAMUEL**

**TRANSLATED INTO COLLOQUIAL ENGLISH**

**Translated by: JOHN SKINNER, D.D.**

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**NUMBER SEVEN.**

# **THE BOOK OF SAMUEL**

**TRANSLATED INTO COLLOQUIAL ENGLISH  
BY THE LATE**

**JOHN SKINNER, D.D.**

**Sometime Principal of Westminster College, Cambridge.**

**NATIONAL ADULT SCHOOL UNION**

**30, BLOOMSBURY STREET, LONDON, W.C.1**





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NOTE.—Throughout the footnotes, LXX denotes the Septuagint, i.e., the Greek translation of the Old Testament, made from a Hebrew text between 200 B.C. and the beginning of the Christian era; and MT the Massoretic Text, i.e., the traditional Hebrew Text.

# THE BOOK OF SAMUEL.

## INTRODUCTION.

**T**HE two books of Samuel are amongst the most instructive, and certainly most interesting, of the Old Testament writings. They deal with a period of history covering about four human generations, from the birth of Samuel to the old age of David—a period crowded with stirring and memorable events in the political life of the people of Israel. They exhibit the transition from the disunion and anarchy of the age of the Judges to the comparative order and security of the early monarchy. To them we are indebted for all we know of the struggle for national independence against the Philistines, which issued in the establishment of the kingdom, first under Saul and then under David. Here also we discover, if not the beginnings, at least the emergence into clear history, of the prophetic movement which so profoundly influenced the course of Israel's religious development. It was a rude and bloody age, in which men of strong will and strong passions played their parts; and the dramatic skill with which such men are made to reveal their characters by word and action has created a series of historical portraits unrivalled in Hebrew literature. There are brave and chivalrous figures like Saul and Jonathan, bold and unscrupulous soldiers like Joab and Abishai, sensual or ambitious princes like Amnon and Absalom, astute counsellors like Ahithophel and Hushai; and many others; while the higher tendencies of the age are represented in two men of genius, Samuel and David, who were gifted with true political insight to guide the destinies of the people in accordance with the purpose of God. Not the least valuable features of the narrative are the glimpses it affords of the common life of common people: their homes and livelihood, their everyday religion and ways of thinking,—often crude and primitive, and ruled by superstitious ideas and barbarous customs, but lighted up by examples of genuine piety, sustained by a living sense of fellowship with Yahweh the God of Israel, and a strong faith in an overruling divine providence.

The Book—the division into two is not original, and is not recognised in the Jewish Canon—is not the work of a single

author, but, like all the historical books of the Old Testament, a compilation from earlier written sources; some of which (but not all) go back in their turn to oral tradition. These sources vary greatly in historical value. Some must have been written within living memory of the events recorded, and take rank among historic documents of the first order; others are no less obviously coloured by the reflections of a later age on these events. Several good scholars believe that among the literary sources of Samuel they can recognise the continuation of the two oldest documents of the Pentateuch, as well as the work of later writers influenced by the teaching of Deuteronomy. However that may be, it is certain that no good purpose would have been served by an attempt to carry through a continuous analysis in the present translation, as is done in the translation of Genesis in this series. Only where a blending of narratives was clear (as in 1 Sam. viii.-xiv.), or seemed so to me (as in 1 Sam. xvii., xviii. and 2 Sam. i.) have I disentangled and separated the combined narratives. But since it is useful to the reader to distinguish sections of later origin, or insertions which interrupt the continuity of the main account, I have indicated such secondary passages by having them printed with an inlet in the margin, which seems a more satisfactory method than the employment of different varieties of type.

Samuel has another and less favourable distinction among Old Testament books: its text is among the worst preserved in the Hebrew Bible. Many passages are quite untranslatable; others when translated yield no intelligible sense; and in innumerable cases slighter adjustments and corrections of the text are called for. Hence the profusion of footnotes with which the following pages are encumbered. Fortunately, in a very considerable number of cases the difficulty is cleared up by a comparison of the ancient Greek translation known as the Septuagint, which was made from Hebrew manuscripts no longer extant, which were free from a good many of the errors that have crept into the present Hebrew text. Amid the bewildering variety of text which the MSS of the Septuagint present, it so happens that a particular group of MSS, representing what is called the Lucianic recension, has been found specially useful in restoring the original text of Samuel. This accounts for the numerous references to the Septuagint in the

Notes, where the Lucianic recension is denoted by the contraction "Luc." Other ancient versions, such as the Latin, the Syriac, the Aramaic Targums, and others, render occasional help; although in the Notes they are mostly slumped together under an "etc." Sometimes all these external aids fail us, and we must either have recourse to conjectural emendation, or give up the attempt in despair. Readers who wish further information on these and suchlike matters will do well to consult a good modern commentary, such as that of Professor A. R. S. Kennedy in the "Century Bible."

About the translation I need only say that it is meant for a translation and not for a "crib." While avoiding mere paraphrase as much as possible, I have purposely shunned the opposite extreme of literalism, or always rendering the same Hebrew word or expression by the same English equivalent. My aim has been to present the sense of the Hebrew in such language as would naturally be used by an English writer of the present day; although it has to be remembered that the ancient Hebrew had many things to say that a modern Englishman would never think of saying. I have thought it necessary here and there to fill in an English phrase to relieve the characteristic compression of Hebrew style: such additions, as involving no change of text, are left without any external indication.

A word must be added on the Notes. Except a very few which are merely explanatory—of names, customs, allusions, and so forth—they all refer to alterations made in the Hebrew text, whether on the authority of an ancient version or by reasonable conjecture. Where only a single word is affected, a numeral stands *after* that word; where more than one, the numeral is repeated at the beginning and end of the alteration. The marks ° ° denote slight changes of text, to which it was thought unnecessary to append a note. Square brackets [ ] enclose short passages which, though left in the translation, are probably not original.

[Dots with a query after them denote that the existing text can neither be translated, nor amended.

Asterisks signify that the text as it stands is deficient, especially where two narratives have been combined.

—Where this is more uncertain a query follows the asterisks.  
—Ed.]

The following are the abbreviations employed :

MS(S) : Manuscript(s).

MT : Massoretic Text (the common text of Hebrew Bibles).

LXX : The Septuagint.

Luc. : The Lucianic recension of the LXX (see above).

Syr. : The Syriac Version.

J.S.

# SAMUEL.

## I. SAMUEL AND SAUL.

(1 Sam. i.-xv.)

### I. THE BIRTH OF SAMUEL (i. 1-28; ii. 11).

At the time when this story opens there was a man living at Ramathaim,<sup>1</sup> <sup>2</sup>a Zuphite<sup>3</sup> from the hill country of Ephraim, Elkanah by name, a son of Jeroham, son of Elihu, son of Tohu, son of Zuph—an Ephraimite. He had two wives, one named Hannah and the other Peninnah; and Peninnah had several children, but Hannah had none. This man went up from his city regularly once a year to offer worship and sacrifice to Yahweh Zebaoth at Shiloh. [There the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, were priests of Yahweh.]<sup>4</sup>

Now when the day of Elkanah's sacrifice came round, it was his custom to serve out helpings to his wife Peninnah and each of her children, while to Hannah he gave <sup>5</sup>only one helping, although<sup>6</sup> he loved Hannah best; only Yahweh had denied her the blessing of motherhood. On these occasions her rival-wife used to exasperate her with gibes about her childless condition. "This went<sup>7</sup> on year after year—every time <sup>8</sup>they<sup>9</sup> came up to the house of Yahweh she would provoke her thus—till one day when she broke down and cried, and would eat nothing; and Elkanah her husband, trying to cheer her, said: "Hannah, why do you weep and refuse to eat? Why are you so sad? Surely I am worth more to you than ten sons!" But Hannah rose up after the meal <sup>10</sup>in the guest-chamber,<sup>11</sup> and

<sup>1</sup> Ramathaim (Two Heights) is the same place as Ramah (Height); see i. 19; ii. 11.

<sup>2-3</sup> The reading of LXX. MT "Zophim" gives no sense.

<sup>3</sup> This sentence seems out of place at this point, because Eli himself is the only priest with whom Elkanah's family has to do.

<sup>4-4</sup> LXX. MT *suggests* (though it cannot be rightly rendered): "a special (or double) helping, because."

<sup>5-5</sup> Doubtful. MT has "in Shiloh," but its text is in several respects suspicious.

'presented herself before Yahweh,' while Eli the priest was sitting on his usual seat by the door-post of the temple of Yahweh. In deep distress she prayed to Yahweh, weeping all the while, and made a vow in such words as these :

"O Yahweh Zebaoth ! If thou wilt but consider the trouble of thy handmaid ; if thou wilt remember and not forget thy handmaid, but wilt give her a man child—then I will dedicate him to Yahweh for as long as he lives, and no razor shall touch his head."

As she continued long in prayer to Yahweh, Eli, who was watching her mouth, concluded that she was tipsy. For Hannah was speaking to herself, only her lips kept moving, while her voice was inaudible. Eli, then, said to her, "How long is this drunken display to last ? Get rid of the wine that is in you." But Hannah answered, "You are mistaken, sir ! I am indeed an unhappy woman, but neither wine nor strong drink of any kind has passed my lips ; I have simply been unburdening my heart before Yahweh. Do not take your handmaid for a disreputable woman : it is because I am so troubled and grieved that I have spoken so long." On hearing this Eli said, "Go in peace, and may the God of Israel grant the petition you have asked of him!" To which she replied, "Think kindly of your handmaid." With that the woman went away, "and entered the guest-chamber, where she ate and drank with her husband"; all signs of gloom having vanished from her face. Next morning they all got up early, and after an act of worship to Yahweh went home to their house at Ramah.

After this Yahweh blessed the union of Elkanah with Hannah his wife so that she became pregnant ; and about New Year time<sup>3</sup> she gave birth to a son, whom she named Samuel : "For," said she, "from Yahweh I 'asked' him."<sup>4</sup> And when the man Elkanah, with the rest of the family, went up to offer the annual

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<sup>1</sup>—<sup>1</sup> A necessary addition from LXX.

<sup>2</sup>—<sup>2</sup> So LXX. MT has simply "and ate."

<sup>3</sup> In the autumn, coinciding with the time of the yearly sacrifice.

<sup>4</sup> As if Samuel meant "Asked of God." The name really means "Name of God." Curiously enough, the explanation given in the text would apply to the name of Saul (= "asked ") !



sacrifice to Yahweh and to fulfil his vow, Hannah did not go up, but said to her husband that she would wait till the boy was weaned; then she would bring him to appear before Yahweh, and let him remain there always. "Do as you think best," said her husband Elkanah, "stay till you have weaned him; only may Yahweh <sup>1</sup>sanction your vow!" So the woman remained at home, and nursed her son till she weaned him. Then when she had weaned him she went up with him, taking with her <sup>2</sup>a three-year-old bullock, <sup>3</sup>a bushel<sup>3</sup> of meal, and a skin-bottle of wine, and brought him into the house of Yahweh at Shiloh ° °. And when they had slaughtered the bullock <sup>4</sup>the mother came with her boy<sup>4</sup> to Eli, and said "Pardon me, sir! but as sure as you live, sir, I am the woman who stood here beside you one day praying to Yahweh. For this boy I prayed, and Yahweh has granted the boon that I asked from him. Therefore I in return now lend him to Yahweh: all the days <sup>5</sup>of his life<sup>5</sup> he is a loan to Yahweh." So <sup>6</sup>she left him there before Yahweh and went home to Ramah<sup>6</sup>; and the boy ministered to Yahweh under the eye of Eli the priest.

## 2. THE SONG OF HANNAH (ii. 1-10).

*Between i. 28 and ii. 11 an editor has inserted the following hymn as a suitable expression of Hannah's feelings (5b); although from the poem as a whole it is plain that it must have originated in a quite different situation.*

Hannah prayed and said:

Exulteth my heart in Yahweh,  
 Elate is my horn through <sup>6</sup>my God<sup>6</sup>;  
 Wide open my mouth 'gainst my<sup>7</sup>foes;  
 For thy help makes me glad.

---

<sup>1</sup>—<sup>1</sup> Syr.; MT "confirm his word."

<sup>2</sup>—<sup>2</sup> LXX. MT "with three bullocks." V. 25 shows that there was only one bullock.

<sup>3</sup> An ephah, which was about the same capacity as a bushel.

<sup>4</sup>—<sup>4</sup> So LXX; MT "they brought the boy."

<sup>5</sup>—<sup>5</sup> So LXX, preserving the original connection of i. 28 with ii. 11a. MT reads (i. 28b) "and they worshipped Yahweh there." (ii. 11a) "And Elkanah went to Ramah to his house."

<sup>6</sup>—<sup>6</sup> LXX.

None is holy as Yahweh, [For there is none beside thee]  
And none a rock like our God.  
Speak not overmuch proudly,  
Nor let insolence come from your mouth;  
For a God all-knowing is Yahweh,  
“A God by whom” deeds “are weighed.”

The bow of the heroes is broken,  
While the falling are girded with might.  
Gluttons take service for bread,  
While the hungry “from labour are freed.”  
The barren is mother of seven,  
While she that bare many doth languish.

Yahweh can kill and make living—  
Thrust down to Sheol and bring up;  
Yahweh “makes poor” and enricheth—  
Humbleth and raiseth to honour:  
Lifteth the poor from the dust—  
From the dunghill raiseth the needy,  
Giving them seats among princes  
As heirs of a glorious throne.

Yea, to Yahweh belong earth’s pillars;  
On them he hath founded the world.  
The feet of his saints he guardeth,  
But sinners perish in darkness;  
For no man by strength prevaieth.  
Yahweh will shatter his foes;  
“The Highest in heaven will break them.”

Yahweh shall judge to earth’s limits—  
Will give strength to his king,  
And exalt his Anointed’s horn.

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1—1 This line is metrically superfluous, and is not represented in LXX.

2—2 LXX.

3—3 Lit. “cease to labour”; instead of the inelegant MT “cease: even to [the barren—she beareth seven].”

4—4 MT “on them in heaven will be thunder.”

9. SAMUEL'S BOYHOOD: THE DOOM OF ELI'S HOUSE (ii. 12-iii. 21).

Now the sons of Eli were unprincipled men who had no respect for Yahweh. The priest's customary due from the people, for example, was that when any one was offering a sacrifice, while the flesh was being boiled the priest's servant came round with a three-pronged fork in his hand: this he thrust at hap-hazard into the pot or kettle or caldron or stewing-pan, and whatever the fork brought up the priest took "for himself." Thus was use and wont for all Israel when they came "to sacrifice to Yahweh" in Shiloh. But now the priest's servant would come, before even the fat was burned on the altar, and say to the person sacrificing, "Hand over some meat to roast for the priest; and he will not accept cooked flesh from you: he must have it raw!" And if the man said, "By all means, let the fat first be burned, and then you may take whatever you please," the fellow would answer, "No! You must give it me now; if not, I will take it by force." This was a very great sin in the eyes of Yahweh on the part of the young men, inasmuch as they belittled the offering of Yahweh.

Meanwhile Samuel was officiating before Yahweh as a little lad wearing a "priestly garment made of linen."<sup>2</sup> And his mother used to make him a little coat, and bring it to him year by year when she came up with her husband for the annual sacrifice. Eli would then bless Elkanah and his wife, and say, "May Yahweh give you issue of this woman, in return for the loan which she has 'lent' to Yahweh!" Then they returned to their home. "And" Yahweh had regard to Hannah: she became pregnant, and had three more<sup>3</sup> sons and two daughters, while the boy Samuel grew up as a ward of Yahweh.

When Eli, who was a very old man, heard from time to time of his sons' behaviour to all Israel, [and how they misconducted themselves with the serving-women at the door of the Tent of Meeting]\* he would expostulate with them thus: "Why do

<sup>2-2</sup> Inserted from LXX.

<sup>3</sup> MT "to him." [The original words are very similar.—Ed.]

[<sup>2-2</sup> Dr. Skinner's MS had "linen ephod."—Ed.]

<sup>3</sup> LXX.

\*The bracketed clause is wanting in LXX; and certain terms used show that it does not belong to the original narrative.

you do such things as I am hearing of<sup>1</sup> from all the people<sup>2</sup> ? Come, come, my sons ! It is no good report that I hear the people of Yahweh spreading abroad. If a man sins against his fellow-man, God may arbitrate, but if a man sins against Yahweh, who can act as arbiter ?” However, they paid no heed to their father’s words, for Yahweh had resolved on their death. And meanwhile the boy Samuel was growing up, and steadily gaining favour both with Yahweh and with men.

There came a man of God to Eli, and uttered the following oracle :

Thus has Yahweh spoken : Did I, or did I not, reveal myself to your father’s house when they were in Egypt, slaves<sup>1</sup> to the house of Pharaoh ? Yes ! I chose it out of all the tribes of Israel<sup>2</sup> to do priestly service<sup>3</sup> to me, to go up on my altar, to raise the sacrificial smoke, and bear an ephod before me ; and I endowed your father’s house with all the fire-offerings of the sons of Israel. Why, then, do you<sup>4</sup> look with an envious eye on my sacrifice and my offerings,<sup>2</sup> and honour your sons more than me, gorging them with the best of all that Israel offers<sup>1</sup> before me<sup>1</sup> ? Therefore (says the oracle of Yahweh, God of Israel) I *did* intend that your house and your father’s house should officiate before me for ever ; but (so *now* runs Yahweh’s oracle) Far be it from me ! For them that honour me I will honour, and those who despise me shall be disgraced. Mark ! The time is coming when I will cut off your strength<sup>3</sup> and the strength<sup>3</sup> of your father’s house<sup>4</sup> and there shall not be an old man in your house for all time. *One* man of yours, indeed, I will not cut off from my altar, that he may wear out his<sup>1</sup> eyesight and pine away in disappointment ; but all the manhood of your race shall die<sup>1</sup> by the sword of<sup>2</sup> men. And this which shall

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<sup>1-1</sup> LXX.

<sup>2-2</sup> Doubtful text : translation follows LXX.

<sup>3</sup> Lit. “arm” ; LXX “seed.”

<sup>4-4</sup> The words omitted are unintelligible and are not represented in LXX, etc. ; they seem to me to be a corrupt duplicate of what is rendered above.

happen to your two sons, Hophni and Phinehas, shall be the sign to you : in one day they shall both die.—But I will raise up for me a faithful priest, who will act in accordance with my heart and mind ; I will build him a lasting house, and he shall go in and out before my anointed (king) for ever. Then it shall come to pass that any one of your house who survives will come and cringe before him for a piece of money or a loaf of bread, and will say, " Give me a berth, please, in some priestly capacity, that I may have a bit of bread to eat."<sup>1</sup>

Now in those days, while young Samuel was ministering to Yahweh under the eye of Eli, the word of Yahweh was scarce, prophetic visions being few and far between.

But one night—when Eli was asleep in his usual place (his eyesight was beginning to fail so that he could hardly see), and the lamp of God was still burning, and Samuel sleeping in the temple of Yahweh where the ark of God was—Yahweh called <sup>2</sup> " Samuel ! Samuel ! " He answered, " Here, sir ! " and running to Eli he said, " Here I am ; you called me ! " " No," said Eli, " I did not call : lie down again." So he went and lay down.

Again the call of Yahweh came, " Samuel ! <sup>3</sup> Samuel ! " ; and again he went to Eli and said, " Here I am ; I heard you call ! " He said, " I did not call, my son ; lie down again."

Now Samuel did not as yet know Yahweh, nor had the word of Yahweh as yet been revealed to him. So when Yahweh called Samuel the third time, he rose and went to Eli, saying as before : " Here I am, for you called me." Then Eli perceived

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<sup>1</sup> The passage ii. 27-36, at least in its present form, is a late composition inserted by an editor, tracing back the suppression of the priesthood of Eli's line to the guilt of his two sons. The main reference (vv. 31-33) is to the massacre of the priests of Nob by Saul, from which Abiathar alone (v. 33) escaped (1 Sam. xxii. 17ff), and of which the death of Hophni and Phinehas (ch. iv. 11) is to be the sign (v. 34). V. 35 refers to the appointment of Zadok in the reign of Solomon, and the exclusion of Abiathar from the priesthood (1 Kings ii. 27). Vv. 36, 37, may be a still later priestly addition referring to the degradation of the Levites in the time of Josiah (2 Kings xxiii. 8, 9).

<sup>2-3</sup> So LXX ; MT " to Samuel."

<sup>3-3</sup> MT : " and Samuel arose."

that Yahweh was calling the lad ; and he said to Samuel : " Go and lie down ; and if someone calls you, say ' Speak, Yahweh ! Thy servant is listening. ' " So Samuel went and lay down in his place.

Then Yahweh came and stood by him, calling as on the former occasions, " Samuel ! Samuel ! " And Samuel said, " Speak ! for thy servant is listening."

This is what Yahweh said to Samuel : " Attend ! I am about to do a thing in Israel which will stun both ears of every one who hears of it. In that day I will make good against Eli all that I have spoken concerning his house from the first word to the last. "Tell him" that I have doomed his house for all time " , because though he knew that his sons were dishonouring God<sup>1</sup> he did not take them to task. Therefore I have sworn concerning the house of Eli, 'Not by sacrifice nor offering shall the guilt of Eli's house be expiated for ever ! ' "

Samuel then lay still till the morning ; and <sup>2</sup>rising early<sup>3</sup> he threw open the doors of the house of Yahweh, but was afraid to tell the vision to Eli, till Eli called him and said : " Samuel, my son ! " When he answered " Yes ! " Eli asked : " What is the word that was spoken to you ? hide nothing from me. Woe betide you if you conceal from me a word of all that he spoke to you ! " Then Samuel told him the whole story, keeping back nothing from him. He said : " He is Yahweh ! Let him do as seems to him good."

And as Samuel grew, Yahweh was with him, and let none of all his words go unfulfilled ; and all Israel from Dan to Beersheba came to know Samuel as an accredited prophet of Yahweh. And Yahweh continued to manifest himself in Shiloh, for Yahweh revealed himself to Samuel <sup>3</sup> 3.

<sup>4</sup>But Eli was very old ; and his sons went from bad to worse in their evil ways before Yahweh.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> So LXX ; MT " themselves " (I) is one of the " corrections of the scribes," made from a feeling of reverence for the divine name.

<sup>2</sup>—<sup>3</sup> LXX.

<sup>3</sup>—<sup>3</sup> MT + " In Shiloh by the word of Yahweh " (not in LXX).

<sup>4</sup>—<sup>4</sup> Inserted from LXX.

4. ISRAEL DEFEATED BY THE PHILISTINES; DEATH OF ELI'S SONS; CAPTURE AND RECOVERY OF THE ARK (IV. 16-vii.1).

<sup>1</sup>About this time the Philistines called up their levies to make war on Israel.<sup>2</sup> The Israelites took the field against them, and encamped by the Stone of Help (Ebenezer), the Philistine camp being at Aphek. The Philistines offered battle to Israel; and after a "sharp" encounter Israel was defeated with a loss of some 4,000 rank and file left dead on the field.

When the people were come back into the camp, the elders of Israel held a consultation as to the reason why Yahweh had suffered them to be beaten that day by the Philistines. Finally they decided to bring the ark of <sup>2</sup>their God<sup>3</sup> from Shiloh, believing that if it were among them it would save them from the power of their enemies. So the people sent to Shiloh, and fetched thence the ark of <sup>3</sup> Yahweh Zebaoth, who is enthroned on the cherubim; and in charge of the ark of <sup>3</sup> God were the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas.

As soon as the ark of <sup>3</sup> Yahweh came into the camp, all Israel raised such a shout that the welkin rang. The Philistines, hearing the noise, wondered what could be the meaning of this loud shouting in the Hebrew camp. When they learned that the ark of Yahweh had come to the camp, the Philistines were filled with consternation; for they thought to themselves, "A god has come to the camp!" They said: "Woe to us! The like of this has never happened before. Woe to us! Who can deliver us from the hand of this mighty god? This is the god who smote the Egyptians with all sorts of disasters<sup>4</sup> and with pestilence.<sup>4</sup> Pull yourselves together, Philistines, like men, else you will be slaves to the Hebrews as they have been to you. Be men, and fight!" And the Philistines fought with such courage that Israel was completely routed, and fled every man to his tent; and in the great slaughter which ensued 30,000 footmen of Israel perished. Moreover the ark of God was

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<sup>1-2</sup> LXX: instead of the redundant sentence of MT: "And the word of Samuel came to all Israel."

<sup>2-3</sup> LXX: MT "the covenant of Yahweh."

<sup>2-3</sup> (three times). MT inserts "the covenant of."

<sup>4-4</sup> MT "in the wilderness."

taken, and the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, were killed.

The news was brought to Shiloh by a man of Benjamin, who ran from the ranks, and reached Shiloh the same day with his coat torn and earth on his head. When he arrived, there was Eli sitting on a seat by the <sup>1</sup>side of the gate, looking out along the road,<sup>2</sup> filled with apprehension for the ark of God. When the man carried the news into the city, a wail arose from the whole town. Eli, hearing the loud cry of distress, said <sup>3</sup>to the men standing near<sup>4</sup>: "What is the meaning of this commotion?" But the man himself came hastily to Eli, and told him. (Now Eli was ninety-eight years old, and his eyes were stiff so that he could not see.) The man said to Eli: "I am the one who has come from the <sup>5</sup>camp<sup>6</sup>; I fled from the ranks this very day." "How did things go, my son?" said Eli; and the messenger answered: "Israel is in flight before the Philistines! A great defeat has been inflicted on the army: your two sons are dead <sup>7</sup> <sup>8</sup>; and the ark of God is taken!" At the mention of the ark of God, Eli fell backward off his seat <sup>9</sup> <sup>10</sup> by the side of the gate, and broke his neck and died; for the man was old and heavy. [He had judged Israel for forty years.]<sup>11</sup>

And when his daughter-in-law, the wife of Phinehas, who was pregnant and near the time of her delivery, heard the tidings of the capture of the ark, and <sup>12</sup>the death of<sup>13</sup> her father-in-law and her husband, her pangs came upon her, and she sank down and was delivered. And as she lay dying, the women about her sought to cheer her by telling her that she had given birth to a son. But she made no answer, and paid no heed. Only she named the child "I-chabod," meaning "Gone is the glory from Israel!" because of the loss of the ark of God, and because of her father-in-law and her husband. She said, "Gone is the glory from Israel; for the ark of God is taken!"

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<sup>1</sup>—<sup>1</sup> LXX; MT corrupt.

<sup>2</sup>—<sup>2</sup> LXX.

<sup>3</sup>—<sup>3</sup> MT adds their names.

<sup>4</sup> LXX "twenty years." The sentence belongs to the chronological scheme of the editor, and not to the original narrative.



Meanwhile the ark of God, which had been taken by the Philistines, was brought from Ebenezer to Ashdod, and lodged in the temple of Dagon by the side of the idol. But early next morning, "when the Ashdodites entered the temple," there was Dagon lying face downward on the ground in front of the ark of Yahweh! So they took Dagon and put him back in his place. On the following morning Dagon was again found prostrate on his face before the ark of Yahweh, but with his head and two hands broken off and lying on the threshold; nothing of Dagon was left except "the trunk."—(This is why the priests of Dagon and all who enter his temple to this day, avoid stepping on the threshold.)

The hand of Yahweh then lay heavy on the Ashdodites, and he caused a panic among them and afflicted them with plague-boils—not only in Ashdod but in the surrounding district. When the men of Ashdod saw how matters stood, they determined that the ark of the God of Israel should not remain with them, because his hand was hard on them and on Dagon their god. So they called together all the Tyrants<sup>3</sup> of the Philistines, to consider what should be done with the ark of the God of Israel. The Tyrants<sup>3</sup> suggested that it should be removed to Gath; so they sent it on "to Gath." No sooner had they done so than the hand of Yahweh was on that city, creating a great panic, and smiting the inhabitants young and old with plague-boils which broke out on them.

Next they sent the ark of God to Ekron. But when it arrived there the Ekronites cried out: "They have brought round the ark of the God of Israel to us,<sup>3</sup> to kill us<sup>3</sup> and our<sup>3</sup> people!" And they summoned all the Tyrants<sup>4</sup> of the Philistines, and said: "Send away the ark of the God of Israel; let it go back to its own place, and not bring death on us and our people." For the whole city was seized with a deadly panic, the hand of God lying very heavily upon them. The men who did not die were smitten with plague-boils, and the cry of the city went up to heaven.

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<sup>1</sup>—<sup>1</sup> Inserted from LXX.

<sup>2</sup>—<sup>2</sup> So Luc. MT "Dagon."

<sup>3</sup>—<sup>3</sup> Dr. Skinner's MS had "me," "me," "my."—Ed.]

<sup>4</sup> A foreign title (*Sarim*), only used of the five leaders of the Philistines.

The ark of Yahweh was in the country of the Philistines for seven months. Then the Philistines called together the priests and soothsayers, and asked them to advise what was to be done with the ark of Yahweh, and by what means it could be sent back to its own place. They answered: "If you mean to send away the ark of the God of Israel, you must not send it empty; you must undoubtedly present it with an expiatory offering: then you will be healed, and it will be made clear to you why his hand does not remove from you." When asked what sort of expiation they should make to it, the priests and soothsayers replied as follows: "It should be, in accordance with the number of the Tyrants of the Philistines, five golden tumours and five golden mice; for it is one calamity that affects 'you' all and your Tyrants. Make, therefore, models of your tumours and of the mice that infest the land, and give honour to the God of Israel; it may be he will relax his hand from you, your god and your land. Why should you harden your hearts, like the Egyptians and Pharaoh? Is it not known that it was only when he had made a laughing-stock of them that they let 'Israel' depart? In the next place, you must make a new cart, and take two milch cows that have never borne a yoke, and harness them to the cart, taking their calves from them and keeping them at home. You will set the ark of Yahweh on the cart, putting the golden emblems which you present as an expiation in a box at its side; then release it and let it go. Mark well what happens: if it goes up in the homeward direction towards Bethshemesh, it is Yahweh<sup>1</sup> who has sent this great evil upon us; if not, we may conclude that it was not his hand that smote us, but some accident that has befallen us."

Accordingly this was done. The men took two milch cows, yoked them to the cart, and shut up their calves at home. They placed the ark of Yahweh on the cart, with the box containing the golden mice and the models of the tumours. And sure enough the cows made straight for Bethshemesh, keeping to one road, lowing as they went, but never deviating to the right or left, and followed by the Tyrants of the Philistines as far as the boundary of Bethshemesh.

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[<sup>1</sup> Dr. Skinner's MS had "he."—Ep.]

Now the people of Bethshemesh were busy with the wheat harvest in the plain, and when they looked up and saw the ark they ran joyfully towards it.<sup>1</sup> The cart meanwhile had come to the field of Joshua the Bethshemeshite and there it stopped : a great stone marks the spot. Then they split up the wood of the cart, and offered the two cows as a burnt-offering to Yahweh. [ ]. Having seen this the five Tyrants of the Philistines returned to Ekron the same day. [ ]. The great stone<sup>4</sup> on which they placed the ark of Yahweh stands to this day<sup>5</sup> as a witness<sup>3</sup> in the field of Joshua the Bethshemeshite.

<sup>6</sup>But because the sons of Jechoniah did not rejoice<sup>6</sup> with the men of Bethshemesh<sup>7</sup> when they beheld the ark of Yahweh,<sup>7</sup> he struck down<sup>8</sup> seventy men<sup>8</sup> among them<sup>9</sup>. And the people mourned because Yahweh had made such a slaughter among the people. "Who can stand before Yahweh this holy God?" cried the men of Bethshemesh, "Who will take him off our hands?" They sent messengers to the people of Kirjath-jearim, telling them that the Philistines had sent back the ark of Yahweh, and imploring them to come down and take it away with them. So the men of Kirjath-jearim came and brought up the ark of Yahweh, and lodged it in the house of Abinadab on the hill; consecrating his son Eleazar as its custodian.

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1—1 So LXX, MT "at the sight."

2 The following notice stands in MT: "The Levites lifted down the ark of Yahweh (and the box that came with it containing the golden emblems) and set it on the great stone, while the men of Bethshemesh offered burnt-offerings and sacrifices to Yahweh that day" (v. 15). The passage obviously breaks the connection, and has been added because in later times only the Levites were allowed to handle the ark.

3 The connection is again broken in MT by a belated notice: "Now these are the golden tumours which the Philistines presented to Yahweh as an expiatory offering: one for Ashdod, one for Gaza, one for Ashkelon, one for Gath, one for Ekron. But the golden mice were according to the number (?) of all the Philistine cities under the five Tyrants, from fortified towns to unwall'd villages" (vv. 17, 18a).

4 So LXX, etc. MT has "meadow (?)."

5—5 An emendation based on LXX, etc. MT is untranslatable.

6—6 An addition of LXX, without which the sense is incomplete.

7—7 Or, "but gazed irreverently on the ark of Yahweh."

8—8 MT "5,070 men" |

9 LXX.

5. SAMUEL AS JUDGE OF ISRAEL (vii. 2-17).

The ark remained a long time at Kirjath-jearim. It had been there twenty years when the whole nation of Israel began to seek Yahweh with mourning. Samuel said to them: "If you will sincerely return to Yahweh, put away the foreign gods that are among you [and the Astartes], and fix your minds on Yahweh to worship him alone; then he will deliver you from the hand of the Philistines." So the Israelites put away the Baals and the Astartes, and worshipped Yahweh alone.

Samuel then convoked an assembly of all Israel at Mizpah, that he might plead with Yahweh on their behalf. They assembled accordingly at Mizpah, where they drew water and poured it out before Yahweh, and fasted all that day, confessing their sins against Yahweh. And Samuel dispensed justice to all Israel in Mizpah.

But the Philistines were informed that the Israelites were gathered at Mizpah, and the Philistine Tyrants<sup>1</sup> took the field against Israel. When the Israelites heard of this they were overcome with fear of the Philistines, and said to Samuel: "Do not turn a deaf ear to us, nor cease calling on Yahweh our God to save us from the hand of the Philistines." Then Samuel took a sucking lamb and offered it as a holocaust<sup>2</sup> to Yahweh, while he cried to Yahweh on behalf of Israel. And Yahweh answered him. For even as Samuel was offering the burnt-sacrifice, the Philistines advanced to give battle to Israel. But Yahweh thundered that day against the Philistines with a mighty noise, putting them in a panic, so that they gave way before Israel. Then the men of Israel, issuing from Mizpah, pursued the Philistines with great slaughter to a point below Bethcar. And Samuel took a stone and set it up between Mizpah and Jeshanah<sup>3</sup> and named it Ebenezer (Stone of Help), saying: "Thus far has Yahweh helped us." The Philistines were so thoroughly subdued that they never invaded Israelite territory again; and Yahweh's hand was against the Philistines all the days of Samuel. Thus the cities which the Philistines had taken from Israel were restored, from Ekron to Gath, as well as the districts surrounding them, which Israel freed from

<sup>1</sup> See on v. 8, p. 19, n. 3.

<sup>2</sup> That is, an offering of which the whole was burnt on the altar.—Ed.]

<sup>3</sup> Read so with LXX, etc. (cf. 2 Chr. xiii. 19), instead of MT, "the cliff."

the dominion of the Philistines. There was peace also between Israel and the Amorites.

Samuel judged Israel as long as he lived. He went on circuit year by year, visiting Bethel, Gilgal and Mizpah, and administering justice at all these sanctuaries. But he always finished his circuit at Ramah, where his house was; there he dispensed justice to Israel, and there he built an altar to Yahweh.

## 6. THE ELECTION OF SAUL AS KING OF ISRAEL: THE WAR OF LIBERATION AGAINST THE PHILISTINES (viii.-xiv.).

*The institution of the monarchy in Israel is the subject of two distinct and easily separable narratives in the first book of Samuel. The first (A) is contained in ix. 1-x. 16; xi.; xiii. 1-7a, 15b-23; xiv. The second (B) is the continuation of ch. vii., and is found in viii.; x. 17-24; xii. It gives no account of the war of liberation, because it has already stated (vii. 13) that the Philistines did not again invade Israel during Samuel's lifetime.—We begin with the older and historically more valuable account of A.*

### A. THE FIRST ACCOUNT (ix. 1-x. 16; xi.; xiii. 1-7a, 15b-23; xiv.).

#### (1) *The Secret Anointing of Saul by Samuel* (ix. 1-x. 16).

There was in those days a well-to-do yeoman of 'Gibeah in Benjamin, whose name was Kish, a son of Abiel, son of Zeror, son of Bechorath, son of Aphiah, of the tribe of Benjamin. This man had a son named Saul, a strikingly handsome young man; there was not a better looking man in Israel than he, standing as he did head and shoulders taller than all the rest of the people.

It happened one day that some she-asses belonging to Kish, Saul's father, went astray, and he bade his son Saul take one of the servants and go in search of the asses. So the two searched through the hill country of Ephraim, and through the district of Shalisha, without finding them; then through the region of Shaalbim,\* still to no purpose; and then through the territory

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\* MT "Shaalim"—unknown.

of Benjamin ; but nowhere could they find any trace of the asses. At last, when they came to the district of Zaph, Saul said to the servant who accompanied him :

"We had better go back, or my father will be more concerned about us than about the asses."

"Stay !" said the servant : "In the city over there, there is a man of God, a man of great repute, whose every word comes true. Let us go there, and perhaps he will direct us in the journey on which we have started."

"Well !" said Saul, "but suppose we went, what could we offer the man ? The bread in our wallets is all done, and there is nothing we could bring to the man of God as a gratuity. What have we ?"

"That's all right !" he answered. "Here is a silver groat<sup>1</sup> which I happen to have on me ; 'give' that to the man of God, and he will show us our way."

"Very good !" said Saul. "Come along ! We will go." [ ]

So they went towards the city where the man of God dwelt. And as they were going up the ascent that led to the city they met some girls coming out to draw water, and asked them if the seer was at home. The girls replied :

"Yes, he is ! The seer<sup>2</sup> has gone on before you. He has just this moment<sup>3</sup> entered the city, for the people have a sacrifice to-day at the high-place. As you go in to the city you will find him, before he goes up to the high-place to dine. The people, you know, will not eat till he comes, because it is he who blesses the sacrifice, and after that the guests fall to. But go up at once ; 'now' is the very time to find him."

They went up to the city ; and just as they passed through the gateway Samuel was coming out in the opposite direction, to go up to the high-place. Now, the day before Saul arrived, Yahweh had disclosed his will to Samuel in the following

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<sup>1</sup>  $\frac{1}{2}$  shekel, at the present value of sterling worth about 7d. e

<sup>2</sup> The omitted verse is a misplaced explanatory gloss on the word "seer," which first occurs a couple of verses later. It reads : "In former time in Israel, when any one went to consult the deity, he would say, 'Come, let us go to the Seer.' For he who now-a-days is called a Prophet, used formerly to be called a Seer."

<sup>3</sup>—3 Following LXX.

oracle: "To-morrow about this time I will send you a man from the land of Benjamin; him you will anoint to be prince over my people Israel; and he shall deliver my people from the might of the Philistines. For I have seen 'the misery of' my people, whose cry has reached me." As soon, then, as Samuel saw Saul, Yahweh prompted him, saying, "This is the man of whom I said to you that he should govern my people."

At this point Saul came up to Samuel in the gateway and said: "Tell me, pray, which is the seer's house." Samuel answered: "I am the seer! Go on in front of me up to the high-place, and you shall both dine with me to-day; and to-morrow morning, before I let you go, I will tell you all that is in your mind. As for the asses that were lost to you three days ago, you need not trouble yourself about them; they have been found. And to whom belongs all that is most precious in Israel, if not to you and all your father's house?" Saul answered: "I am but a man of Benjamin, the smallest of the tribes of Israel; and my clan is the least influential of all the clans of Benjamin; why should you thus address me?"

When they reached the high-place, Samuel took Saul and his servant, and brought them into the guest-chamber, and gave them a place at the head of the guests, who numbered about thirty men. Then he called to the cook, "Serve up the joint I gave you—the one I told you to set apart." So the cook took up the shoulder<sup>2</sup> and the fat tail,<sup>3</sup> and set them before Saul; And Samuel said: "See! <sup>4</sup>What is set before you is a specially reserved portion. Eat! for it is to a feast in your honour that I have invited the people."<sup>5</sup> So Saul dined with Samuel that day. Then they came down from the high-place to the city, <sup>6</sup>where a bed was made ready for Saul<sup>6</sup> on the roof, and he <sup>7</sup>retired to rest.<sup>5</sup>

At daybreak Samuel called to Saul on the roof: "Rise up, and I will see you on your way." So Saul got up, and he and Samuel went out into the street together. And as they were

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<sup>1—2</sup> Added with LXX, etc.

<sup>2—4</sup> A probable emendation.

<sup>3—5</sup> A bold guess at the meaning of an impossible text!

<sup>4—6</sup> LXX; MT "and he talked with Saul."

<sup>5—7</sup> LXX.

going down, at the lower end of the city, Samuel said to Saul, "Bid the servant walk on before us" <sup>1</sup>; but you stand here a moment while I make known to you a word of God." Samuel then took out a vial of oil, which he poured on Saul's head, and kissing him said: "This means that Yahweh anoints you prince over his people Israel: it is you who shall govern Yahweh's people, and you who shall deliver them from the hand of all their foes. And these are the signs by which you shall know that Yahweh has thus anointed you to be prince over his heritage: When you part from me to-day you will meet two men near Rachel's grave in the territory of Benjamin at Zelzach; they will tell you that the asses you set out to seek have been found, and that your father has lost all interest in the affair of the asses in his anxiety for you, and cries, 'What shall I do for my son?' Passing on from there, you will come to the oak of Tabor, where there will meet you three men going up to God at Bethel, the first carrying three kids, the second three loaves of bread, and the third a skin of wine: they will salute you and offer you two loaves, which you will accept at their hands. After that you will come to Gibeah, 'the Hill' of God, where the Philistine commandant dwells; and as you enter the city there you will encounter a band of dervish-prophets marching down from the high-place, to the music of harp, tambourine, flute and lyre, and they themselves raving in prophetic frenzy; the spirit of Yahweh will come upon you, and you will rave like a prophet among them, and be changed into a new man. And when these signs have come to pass, you must act as occasion may serve; for God is with you." [ ]<sup>2</sup>

And as Saul turned his back to leave Samuel, God wrought a change of heart in him; and all these signs came true that day. <sup>3</sup> <sup>3</sup>. Going on 'thence' to Gibeah, they were met

1—1 A long omission in MT, due to the eye of a scribe having slipped from the first to the second occurrence of the same expression. The LXX preserves the original connection.

2 "And go down to Gilgal before me; I will follow you to offer burnt-offerings and peace offerings. Seven days you must wait till I come and tell you what to do." The verse anticipates xiii. 76-154, both being late additions to the narrative (see pp. 41, 42).

3—3 The fulfilment of the first two signs is omitted, perhaps accidentally.



by a band of prophets, and the spirit of God came on Saul so that he raved among them. When those who had known him of old saw him raving among the prophets they were amazed, and the people said to one another: "What can have come over the son of Kish? Is Saul also among the prophets?" But one of the neighbours answered: "And who then is *their* father?" Hence arose the common saying: "Is Saul also among the prophets?"

When Saul's ecstasy was over and he had gone into the house,<sup>1</sup> his uncle asked him and his servant where they had gone. "To look for the asses," said Saul; "and when we saw that it was no use we came to Samuel." "And what said Samuel to you?" asked the uncle; "tell me that." "Why, he told us that the asses were found." But as to the matter of the kingship Saul maintained a discreet silence. \* \*

(2) *Saul's Victory over the Ammonites: his Election as King*  
(x. 27b-xi. 15).

<sup>1</sup>It was about a month after this<sup>3</sup> that Nahash the Ammonite came up and laid siege to Jabesh in Gilead. The citizens of Jabesh offered to become subject to Nahash, provided he made a binding treaty with them. To this Nahash replied, "On one condition I will make <sup>2</sup>a treaty<sup>3</sup> with you: that every man of you has his right eye put out. I will make this a disgrace to all Israel." The elders of Jabesh then asked for a seven days' armistice, while they sent messengers through the length and breadth of Israel; promising Nahash that if no succour came to them they would surrender to him.

When the messengers came to Gibeah of Saul and laid their story before the people, the whole community broke into loud weeping. Just then Saul came in from the fields driving his oxen before him, and inquired what was the matter with the people that they were weeping so. They told him the message from the men of Jabesh. When Saul heard these tidings the Spirit of God came upon him; and in a blaze of indignation he took a pair of oxen, dismembered them, and sent them by couriers throughout all Israel, with the proclamation: "He who does

<sup>1</sup> MT "high-place"—wrongly.

<sup>2-3</sup> MT "what Samuel had said," omitted with LXX.

<sup>3-3</sup> LXX and Versions.

not come out after Saul : —this is what shall be done to his cattle ! ” The terror of Yahweh fell on the people, and they came out as one man ; and when Saul mustered them in Bezek they numbered 300,000 Israelites and 30,000 Judeans.

Then “he” said to the messengers who had come from Jabesh, “Carry this answer to the men of Jabesh in Gilead : ‘To-morrow by the time the sun is hot, deliverance will come to you.’ ” When the messengers returned with this report to the people of Jabesh they were glad, and sent word to the Ammonites that they would surrender on the morrow. “Then,” they said, “you may do to us whatever you please.”

Accordingly, on the following morning Saul divided his force into three companies ; and they stormed the camp in the morning watch. And the slaughter of the Ammonites went on until the heat of the day, and the survivors were dispersed so that no two of them were left together anywhere.

[And the people said to Samuel, “Where are the men who say, ‘Shall Saul reign over us?’ Hand over the men that we may put them to death.” But Saul (? Samuel) said : “No man shall be put to death this day ; for to-day Yahweh has worked deliverance in Israel.” And Samuel said to the people, “Come ! Let us go to Gilgal, and there renew the kingdom.”]

The whole people then went to Gilgal ; and there, in Gilgal, they crowned Saul as king before Yahweh, and sacrificed peace-offerings before Yahweh. It was a joyous occasion to Saul and to all the men of Israel.

### (3) *The Outbreak of War with the Philistines* (xiii. 2-7a, 15b-23).

3 Saul picked out 3,000 men of Israel : of these 2,000 were with Saul himself in Michmash and the hill of Bethel, and 1,000 with Jonathan in Gibeah of Benjamin ; the rest of the people he had dismissed to their homes. Jonathan now

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— MT “and after Samuel” — probably an error.

\* Cf. x. 27a. There is no room for such an incident in either (A or B) account of Saul's election, unless we suppose that B originally had a notice of some signal deliverance similar to that of ch. vii. More probably the verses were inserted by a scribe to harmonise the two narratives.

3-5 xiii. 1 should be omitted with LXX. MT reads : “Saul was years old when he began to reign, and he reigned two years over Israel.”

slaw the Philistine commandant who resided in Gibeah<sup>1</sup>; and the report reached the Philistines<sup>2</sup> that the Hebrews had revolted.<sup>3</sup> Saul meanwhile had sent a trumpet-call through the whole land<sup>4</sup>; all Israel had heard that Saul had slain the Philistine officer, and Israel was in bad odour with the Philistines; and the people were called out to follow Saul

<sup>4</sup> The Philistines, too, had already mobilised for war with Israel: 3,000 chariots, 6,000 horsemen, and common soldiers innumerable as the sand on the sea-shore; and they came up and encamped at Michmash to the east of Bethaven. The Israelites now saw that they were in a desperate plight—for the people were oppressed—and hid themselves in caves and dens, in rock-crevices, in tombs<sup>5</sup> and cisterns; while <sup>6</sup>a great number<sup>6</sup> crossed the Jordan to the land of Gad and Gilead. <sup>7</sup> 7. <sup>8</sup>The rest of the people followed Saul<sup>8</sup> to Geba<sup>9</sup> of Benjamin, where Saul mustered the force at his disposal, numbering about 600 men.

Saul and his son Jonathan and the people that were with them were now lying in Geba of Benjamin, while the Philistines were encamped in Michmash. But the raiders had been sent out from the Philistine camp in three columns; of which one took the direction of Ophrah to the district of Shual, another toward Beth-horon, and the third the direction of the <sup>9</sup>hill<sup>9</sup> overlooking the ravine of the Hyænas towards the desert.<sup>10</sup> At the

<sup>1</sup> So LXX, etc.; MT "Geba"; but see x. 5.

<sup>2-4</sup> Transposing clauses.

<sup>3</sup> LXX; MT "heard."

<sup>4-4</sup> ? MT "to Gilgal."

<sup>5</sup> Or "cellars."

<sup>6-6</sup> MT "Hebrews"—corrupt.

<sup>7-7</sup> For *Pa.* 7b-15a; see pp. 41-42.

<sup>8-8</sup> Following LXX in part.

<sup>9</sup> MT "Gibeah."

<sup>10</sup> *Pa.* 19-23 are very corrupt and form no part of the original text. They read somewhat as follows: "Now no blacksmith was to be found in all the land of Israel; for the Philistines feared that the Hebrews might make themselves swords and spears. So all Israel had to go down to the Philistines to get a plough-share or hoe or axe or ox-goat sharpened. . . . Thus it came about that on the day of the battle of Michmash neither sword nor spear was found in the hands of the people with Saul and Jonathan; only Saul and Jonathan possessed such weapons."

same time an outpost of the Philistines was pushed forward to the Pass of Michmash.

*(4) Jonathan's Brilliant Exploit (xiv. 1-15).*

One day Jonathan, Saul's son, without letting his father know, proposed to the lad who carried his weapons that they should cross over to the outpost of the Philistines on the opposite side. Saul in fact was then at the further end of Geba,<sup>1</sup> under the pomegranate tree that grows by <sup>the</sup> threshing-floor.<sup>2</sup> The people with him numbered about 600 men; Ahijah the son of Ahitub, the brother of Ichabod, the son of Phinehas, the son of Eli the priest of Yahweh at Shiloh, being there in charge of an ephod. None of the people were aware that Jonathan had gone.

Now between the passes through which Jonathan meant to cross over to the Philistine outpost, there are two steep cliffs, one on either side; one is called Bozez and the other Seneh. One cliff is ° ° on the north side in front of Michmash, the other on the south side in front of Geba.

Jonathan then said to his armour-bearer, "Let us cross over to the outpost of these uncircumcised dogs; it may be that Yahweh will do something for us; for there is no limit to Yahweh's power to save, whether by many or by few." "Do whatever you have a mind to," answered the lad, "I am your man! °My mind° is the same as yours." "Listen, then!" said Jonathan, "As we are crossing over to these men, we must show ourselves; if they say to us, 'Stand still till we reach you,' we will stop where we are, and not go up to them; but if they say, 'Come up to us,' then up we will go; for Yahweh will have delivered them into our hand. This shall be the sign for us." So when the two showed themselves to the Philistines of the outpost, they said, "Ha! Here are some Hebrews creeping out of the holes in which they have hidden themselves." Then the men of the post called out to Jonathan and his armour-bearer, "Come up to us, and we will show you a thing or two!" "Up after me!" said Jonathan to his armour-bearer; "Yahweh

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<sup>1</sup> MT "Gibeah."

<sup>2</sup> MT "Migron."

has delivered them into the hand of Israel," So Jonathan climbed up on his hands and knees, the armour-bearer following him; and "the Philistines" took to flight before Jonathan, "who cut them down," while the armour-bearer came behind him despatching the wounded.

This first exploit by Jonathan and his armour-bearer resulted in the slaughter of about twenty men<sup>1</sup>. Then a tremor of fear fell on the camp,<sup>2</sup> and on the men in the field<sup>3</sup>; all the army, the outpost as well as the raiding column, were terror-stricken also; and to crown all there was an earthquake, which brought upon all an unearthly panic.

#### (5) *The Philistine Debacle* (xiv. 16-23a).

Now Saul's watchmen at Geba<sup>4</sup> in Benjamin, looking across the valley, saw the "men in the camp" rushing about "in all directions"; and Saul gave orders to the people that were with him to hold a roll-call, and see which of them was missing. When this was done it was found that Jonathan and his armour-bearer had gone away. Saul then said to Ahijah—"it was he who at this time carried the ephod before Israel—"Bring "the ephod" here." But even as Saul spoke to the priest the noise in the Philistine camp grew louder and louder; and Saul bade the priest withdraw his hand. Saul then called out his men; and when they entered the camp,<sup>7</sup> they found every man with his sword drawn against his neighbour, in the utmost confusion. Those Hebrews, moreover, "who" for some time back had sided with the Philistines "and" had come up with them to the camp—they too deserted<sup>8</sup> to join the Israelites under Saul and Jonathan. And all the Israelites who were hiding in the hill-country of Ephraim, when they heard that the

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<sup>1</sup>—<sup>1</sup> LXX addition.

<sup>2</sup>—<sup>2</sup> An unintelligible clause.

<sup>3</sup>—<sup>3</sup> LXX.

<sup>4</sup> MT "Gibeah."

<sup>5</sup>—<sup>5</sup> So LXX.

<sup>6</sup>—<sup>6</sup> So LXX; MT "the ark of God." See p. 13.

<sup>7</sup> MT "battle."

<sup>8</sup> LXX and Syr.

Philistines were in flight, came likewise and hung on their rear fighting. Thus did Yahweh give victory to Israel that day.

(6) *Incidents of the Pursuit* (xiv. 23b-35).

The battle had now passed beyond Beth-horon<sup>1</sup>; "the whole nation was with Saul, about 10,000 men, and the fighting was general all over the hill-country of Ephraim. But Saul committed a grave indiscretion<sup>2</sup> that day, in "imposing" the following oath on the people: "Cursed be the man who takes food till evening, before I have taken vengeance on my enemies." So none of the people had tasted food. <sup>3</sup>Now there was honey-comb<sup>3</sup> on the open field; and when the people came to it they found that <sup>4</sup>the honey was flowing from it<sup>4</sup>; yet no man put his hand to his mouth, because the people feared the oath. But Jonathan, who had not heard when his father imposed the oath on the people, put out the staff he had in his hand, dipped the end of it in the honey-comb, and brought his hand to his mouth; and immediately his <sup>5</sup>spirits revived.<sup>5</sup> Then one of the people spoke up and said: "Your father took an oath of the people in these terms: 'Cursed be the man who tastes food this day.'" Jonathan answered, "My father's act is disastrous to the country! Why, look how my <sup>5</sup>spirit revived<sup>5</sup> when I tasted this little drop of honey! How much more, then, if the people had but eaten to-day from the spoil of their enemies!—but <sup>6</sup>now the slaughter among the Philistines is of no great account."<sup>6</sup>

They fought the Philistines that day from Michmash to Aijalon, and the people were quite exhausted. In their hunger they <sup>7</sup>threw themselves<sup>7</sup> on the spoil; and seizing sheep and oxen and calves, they slew them on the ground, and ate the flesh with the blood. But when it was reported to Saul that the

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<sup>1</sup> So Luc., etc.; MT "Bethaven."

<sup>2-4</sup> Inserted from LXX.

<sup>3-3</sup> So LXX.

<sup>4-4</sup> So MT, slightly altered. But LXX<sup>3</sup> suggests "its bees had left it," which may be right.

<sup>5-6</sup> Lit. "eyes brightened."

<sup>6-6</sup> So MT; LXX omits "not," rendering "in that case the slaughter among the Philistines would have been much greater."

<sup>7-7</sup> So Luc. and Versions.

people were sinning against Yahweh by eating with the blood, he said, "You transgress! Roll me a great stone hither<sup>1</sup>." Then he gave the order, "Go about among the people, and make them bring every one his ox or sheep to me, and slay it here; and eat, that they may not sin against Yahweh by eating with the blood." So every one brought <sup>2</sup>what he had<sup>3</sup> to Yahweh,<sup>4</sup> and slaughtered it there. Thus Saul set up an altar to Yahweh; it was the first of the altars which he erected to Yahweh.

(7) *The Pursuit arrested in consequence of Saul's Rash Oath* (xiv. 36-46, 52).

Saul then said: "Let us follow down after the Philistines by night, and harry them till daybreak; and not leave a man of them alive!" When the people consented, <sup>5</sup>he said to the priest,<sup>4</sup> "Let us draw near here to God." So Saul inquired of God: "Shall I go down after the Philistines? Wilt thou deliver them into the hand of Israel?" but no answer was made that day. He then said, "Draw near hither, all you who are leaders of the people; and inquire and see <sup>6</sup>by whom<sup>6</sup> this sin has been committed to-day. For, by the life of Yahweh, the deliverer of Israel, were it by my son Jonathan he should assuredly die." And none of all the people answered him. Then addressing all Israel he said: "You shall be one party, and I and Jonathan my son the other." The people signified their assent. Saul, then, speaking to Yahweh, said, "O God of Israel! <sup>5</sup>Why hast thou not answered thy servant this day? If on me or my son Jonathan this guilt lies, O Yahweh, God of Israel, then give Urim; but if on thy people Israel, then<sup>5</sup> give Thummim." The lot fell on Jonathan and Saul, and the people were acquitted. "Now cast the lot between me and my son Jonathan," said Saul. <sup>6</sup>This was done<sup>6</sup> and Jonathan

<sup>1</sup> LXX; MT "to-day."

<sup>2-3</sup> LXX; MT "his ox in his hand."

<sup>3-3</sup> Conjectured for MT "that night"; LXX omits.

<sup>4-4</sup> MT "the priest said."

<sup>5-5</sup> LXX, etc., supply the long omission in MT, caused by the recurrence of the word "Israel" before and at the end of the omitted passage.

<sup>6-6</sup> Here again LXX has a lengthy addition, but its originality is not so obvious.

was taken. "Tell me what you have done," said Saul to Jonathan; and Jonathan told him; "It is true I tasted a little honey on the top of the staff in my hand. Here I am! I am ready to die." Saul said, "God help me, Jonathan, but die you must!" But here the people interposed and said to Saul, "What? Jonathan die! He who has achieved this great victory in Israel? God forbid! By the life of Yahweh, not a hair of his head shall fall to the ground; for he has wrought with God this day." So the people ransomed Jonathan, and he had not to die. But Saul drew off from the pursuit of the Philistines, and the Philistines retired to their own country.

The war with the Philistines, however, continued acute all the days of Saul. And whenever Saul saw a brave and warlike man, he took him into his service.

(8) *A List of Saul's Wars, and his Family Connections* (xiv. 47-51)<sup>1</sup>.

When Saul obtained the kingdom over Israel he waged war on all sides against his enemies—against Moab, and the Ammonites, and Edom; against the kings of Zobah and against the Philistines; and wherever he turned his arms he "was successful." He acted valiantly, and crushed Amalek, and delivered Israel from the hands of its spoilers.

The sons of Saul were Jonathan, Ishbo<sup>3</sup>, and Malkishua; the names of his two daughters were Merab, the elder, and Michal, the younger. His wife was Ahinoam, the daughter of Ahimaaz; and the name of his commander-in-chief was Abner, the son of Ner, Saul's uncle. Both Kish, Saul's father, and Ner, the father of Abner, were sons of Abiel.

B. SAUL'S ELECTION: SECOND ACCOUNT (viii.; x. 17-24; xii.; x. 25-27a).

(1) *The Israelites demand a King* (viii.).

Now when Samuel grew old he appointed his sons as judges over Israel. His first-born was named Joel, and his second

<sup>1</sup> Vv. 47-51 were inserted here by an editor, breaking the connection between v. 46 and v. 52.

<sup>2</sup>—<sup>3</sup> So LXX; MT would mean "he was worried."

<sup>3</sup> That is: "Man of Yahweh"; originally perhaps "Eabbaal" (man of Baal); see 2 Sam. ii. 8, etc. MT reads here "Ishvi."



**Ahijah** ; these acted as judges in Beer-sheba. His sons, however, did not walk in his ways, but looked after their own interest, accepting bribes and perverting justice. Then all the elders of Israel met together, and came to Samuel at Ramah, and said to him : "You are now old, and your sons do not walk in your ways ; we would therefore have you now to set us up a king to judge us, like all other nations." This request for a king to judge them was very displeasing to Samuel ; but when he prayed to Yahweh about it, Yahweh answered : "Listen to the voice of the people in all that they say to you ; for it is not you that they reject, but me, by refusing to have me as king over them. It is in keeping with their whole behaviour from the time when I brought them up from Egypt to this day—their forsaking me and worshipping other gods—that they now treat you thus. Comply, therefore, with their wish ; only warn them well, and show them the kind of government that will be exercised by the king who shall rule over them."

These words of Yahweh Samuel reported to the people who were asking for a king, and continued : "This will be the way in which the king will rule over you : Your sons he will take as his charioteers and horsemen, and as runners before his chariot ; he will make them officers of regiments and companies ; he will set them to plough his fields, reap his harvest, and make his weapons and chariot-gear. Your daughters he will take into his service as perfumers, cooks and bakers. The best of your fields and vineyards he will confiscate, and bestow on his courtiers. On your arable land and vineyards he will levy a tithe, and give it to his eunuchs and retainers ; your slaves, male and female, the best of your cattle<sup>1</sup> and asses he will take and use for his husbandry ; of your flocks he will take a tithe ; you will be completely enslaved by him. The day will come when you will complain of the king you have chosen ; but in that day Yahweh will not answer you."

But the people refused to listen to Samuel's warning. "No !" they said, "we must have a king over us. We would be like all other nations, having our own king to judge us, and be our leader, and fight our battles." So Samuel, having heard all that the people had to say, reported it to Yahweh. Yahweh

answered, "Give them their desire; appoint a king over them." Samuel then bade the men of Israel go home, each one to his city.

(2) *Saul elected King by Lot* (x. 17-24).

In due time Samuel summoned the people before Yahweh to Mizpah, and addressed them as follows:

"Thus says Yahweh the God of Israel: 'I brought up Israel from Egypt and delivered you from the hand of the Egyptians, and of all the kings<sup>1</sup> that oppressed you.' But you have this day rejected your God who was a saviour to you in all your distresses and dangers; You have said, 'No!<sup>2</sup>' but you must set a king over us.' Very well! Present yourselves now before Yahweh, by your tribes and by your townships."

So Samuel marshalled all the tribes of Israel, and the tribe of Benjamin was chosen. Then he marshalled the tribe of Benjamin clan by clan, and the clan of Matri was chosen. <sup>3</sup>Then he marshalled the clan of Matri man by man<sup>3</sup>; and Saul the son of Kish was chosen. But when they looked for him he was not to be found; and they again consulted the oracle of Yahweh: "Has the man come here at all?" The answer was "Yes, he is hiding himself among the baggage." So they ran and dragged him forth; and as he stepped forward in the midst of the people he towered above them all from his shoulders upwards. And Samuel said to all the people: "You see the man whom Yahweh has chosen, that there is none like him among all the people!" And all the people shouted: "Long live the king!"

(3) *Samuel's Valedictory Address* (xii.; x. 25-27a).

Samuel then addressed all Israel as follows:

"I have now, as you see, fully complied with your request by setting a king over you. Henceforth, therefore, you have the king to look to. And I am now old and gray-headed, with sons among you; and I have lived my life openly before you from my youth to this day. Here I stand! Bear witness against me before Yahweh and his anointed 'king.'<sup>4</sup> Is there

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<sup>1</sup> MT "kingdoms."

<sup>2</sup> So LXX and Versions.

<sup>3-5</sup> To be inserted with LXX.

any one whose ox or ass I have taken? Any whom I have defrauded or oppressed? any from whom I have accepted a bribe 'to wink at wrong? Testify against me,' and I will make amends to you." They answered: "You have neither defrauded nor oppressed us, nor have you received anything from any man's hand." He said to them: "Then Yahweh is witness, and his anointed king is witness, against you this day, that you have found nothing amiss in my conduct?" And "they" answered, "That is so." And Samuel repeated before all the people: "Yahweh <sup>2</sup>is witness,<sup>2</sup> who raised up Moses and Aaron, and brought your fathers up from the land of Egypt."

"And now stand still, while I reason with you in Yahweh's presence, <sup>2</sup>and rehearse to you<sup>2</sup> all the righteous dealings of Yahweh with you and your fathers. When Jacob <sup>2</sup>and his sons<sup>2</sup> came to Egypt, <sup>2</sup>and the Egyptians afflicted them,<sup>2</sup> your fathers cried to Yahweh, and he sent Moses and Aaron, who brought them out of Egypt, and <sup>2</sup>he<sup>2</sup> established them in this place. But they forgot Yahweh, their God, and he gave them over into the hand of Sisera the general of <sup>2</sup>king Jabin of<sup>2</sup> Hazor, and into the hand of the Philistines, and of the king of Moab, who made war upon them. When they cried to Yahweh and said: 'We have sinned in forsaking Yahweh and worshipping the Baals and Astartes; but now do thou deliver us from our foes and we will serve thee'—then Yahweh sent men like Jerubbaal, Barak,<sup>3</sup> Jephthah and Samuel,<sup>4</sup> and he delivered you from the hand of your enemies around you, so that you dwelt in security. But when you saw that Nahash the king of the Ammonites threatened you, you said to me: 'This cannot go on; we must have a king to reign over us;' although Yahweh your God is your king. And now you see the king whom you have chosen <sup>4</sup> <sup>2</sup>: Yahweh has set a king over you. If you will fear Yahweh, and serve him, obeying his voice and not rebelling against him, if you and your king who reigns over you will follow after Yahweh your God, <sup>2</sup>it will be well with you.<sup>2</sup> But if you

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<sup>1</sup>—<sup>1</sup> LXX reads: "even as much as a pair of sandals? Testify against me." I retain the last three words, although they are not in MT.

<sup>2</sup>—<sup>2</sup> So LXX.

<sup>3</sup>—<sup>3</sup> So LXX, Syr.; MT "Bedan"!

<sup>4</sup> Luc. and Syr. read "Samson."

do not obey the voice of Yahweh, but rebel against him, then Yahweh's hand will be against you to destroy you and your king.<sup>1</sup>

"Now stand still, and see the great thing that Yahweh is about to do before your eyes. It is now wheat-harvest, is it not? Well! I will call on Yahweh to send thunder and rain; then you will know and understand how great in the sight of Yahweh is the evil you have done in asking for a king." So Samuel called on Yahweh, and Yahweh sent thunder and rain that day; and the people were seized with a great fear of Yahweh and of Samuel, and said to Samuel: "Pray to Yahweh your God for us, your servants, lest we die, because to all our other sins we have added this wickedness of asking for a king." But Samuel reassured the people and said: "You need not fear. You have indeed done all this evil; only do not turn aside from following Yahweh, but serve him with undivided allegiance. Do not turn away after unreal gods, who are good for nothing and cannot save you, because they are unrealities. For Yahweh will not cast off his people for his great name's sake; seeing it has been his good pleasure to make you his people. As for me, God forbid that I should sin against Yahweh by ceasing to pray for you, and to instruct you in the good and straight way. Only fear Yahweh, and serve him loyally with all your heart, considering how great a thing he has done among you. On the other hand, if you do evil, both you and your king shall perish."

Samuel then recited to the people the constitution of the kingdom, which he wrote in a book and deposited before Yahweh. Having done this he dismissed the people to their several homes. Saul likewise went home to Gibeah, and with him went the valiant "men" whose heart God had touched. But certain churlish fellows said: "How should this man deliver us?" and they showed their contempt for him by bringing him no present.

#### 7. THE BREACH BETWEEN SAMUEL AND SAUL AT GILGAL.

*Two versions of this incident have been preserved: one in ch. xv. (an independent narrative), and the other in xiii. 7b-15a, closely and cleverly dovetailed into the older story*

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<sup>1</sup>—LXX; MT "and your fathers."

of Saul's kingship (A) (see x. 8). Of these the first connects it with Saul's failure to execute the ban on the Amalekites, and is obviously the earlier of the two. The second, which traces it to an act of disobedience on the part of Saul, is of later origin, although it must have been incorporated in A before the amalgamation of A and B.

(1) *Saul commanded to exterminate the Amalekites* (xv.).

Samuel said to Saul one day: "It was I whom Yahweh commissioned to anoint you king over his people Israel; now, therefore, listen to the voice of ° ° Yahweh. Thus has Yahweh Zebaoth spoken! 'I am resolved to punish the Amalekites for their conduct towards Israel, inasmuch as they resisted its advance when it came up from Egypt.' Go, therefore and smite the Amalekites, and put the ban on "them and" all that they possess, sparing none, but slaying man and woman, infant and suckling, sheep and ox, camel and ass."

So Saul called up the people, and mustered them in Telam<sup>1</sup> [200,000 footmen and 10,000 horsemen<sup>2</sup>], and came to the chief city of the Amalekites. There he set an ambush in the water-course, while he sent a message to the Kenites to clear out from among the Amalekites: "else," he said, "I may exterminate you along with them; although you showed friendship to ° ° the Israelites when they came up from Egypt." The Kenites accordingly withdrew from among the Amalekites, whom Saul then routed from Telam<sup>3</sup> all the way to Shur, which lies to the east of Egypt. He captured Agag the king of Amalek alive, but all the people he put to the ban with the sword. But Saul and the people spared Agag and the best of the sheep and cattle, the fatlings and calves, and everything of value, being unwilling to destroy them; but all worthless and useless stuff they put to the ban.

Thereupon the word of Yahweh came to Samuel: "I regret having made Saul king, because he has turned away from me, and has not carried out my command." Samuel was so troubled by this that he cried to Yahweh the whole night; and next

<sup>1</sup> MT "Tehim"; see Josh. xv. 24.

<sup>2</sup> MT "10,000 men of Judah."

<sup>3</sup> MT "Havilah" (see Gen. xiv. 18).

morning early he rose and went to meet Saul, but was told that Saul had come to Carmel, and after erecting a monument had turned and moved on down to Gilgal.

When Samuel came to Saul, Saul hailed him with "Welcome in the name of Yahweh! I have carried out the command of Yahweh." But Samuel answered, "What then is this bleating of sheep that strikes my ear? And this lowing of oxen that I hear?" "These," said Saul, "have been brought home from Amalek. The people have spared the best of the sheep and cattle to sacrifice to Yahweh your God. The rest we have put to the ban." Then Samuel said to Saul: "Say no more! I must tell you what Yahweh spoke to me last night." He answered, "Say on!" Samuel continued:

"Is it not true that, little as you may be in your own estimation, you are the head of the tribes of Israel? for Yahweh anointed you king over Israel. And Yahweh sent you on a particular errand, and said to you 'Go and put the ban on those sinners the Amalekites, making war upon them till 'you have' exterminated 'them.' Why, then, have you not obeyed Yahweh's command, but pounced on the spoil, and done a thing displeasing to Yahweh?" Saul replied: "'I did' obey the command of Yahweh; I went the way which Yahweh sent me; I brought back Agag the king of the Amalekites, and put the ban on Amalek. But the people took part of the spoil, sheep and oxen, the best of what fell under the ban, to sacrifice to Yahweh your God in Gilgal." Samuel answered:

"Less pleasing to Yahweh is holocaust<sup>2</sup> and sacrifice  
Than obedience to Yahweh's voice.  
Yea, to obey is better than sacrifice,—  
To hearken than fat of rams.  
For contumacy is sin like witchcraft,  
And presumption a crime like idols.  
Since you have rejected the word of Yahweh,  
He rejects you as king <sup>3</sup>of Israel<sup>3</sup>."

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<sup>2</sup> The verses retracted in the margin are probably a later expansion of the narrative.

[<sup>2</sup> See note on p. 22.]

3—3 Added by LXX, etc.

Saul said to Samuel, "I have sinned! I have transgressed against the command of Yahweh and against your word, because I was afraid of the people and yielded to their will. But now, I pray you, forgive my sin, and turn back with me that I may worship Yahweh." But Samuel refused to turn back with him.

"Inasmuch as you have rejected the word of Yahweh, he has rejected you as king over Israel." Then, as Samuel turned to go, Saul seized the corner of his mantle, and it tore off in his hand. "Thus," said Samuel, "does Yahweh tear the kingdom of Israel from you this day, and give it to another, a better man than you. Nor does the God<sup>1</sup> of Israel ever lie or repent, for he is not a man that he should repent." "I have sinned!" said Saul, "Yet now show me respect before the elders of my people and before Israel: turn back with me, that I may worship Yahweh your God." Samuel then turned back with Saul, and Saul worshipped Yahweh.

Then Samuel ordered Agag the king of the Amalekites to be brought to him. As Agag, "all of a tremble," came forward to him, he said, "Truly the bitterness of death is past!" But Samuel answered: —

"As your sword has women made childless,  
So your mother 'mong women be childless;"

and so saying he cut Agag in pieces before Yahweh in Gilgal.

After this Samuel departed to Ramah, while Saul went up to his house at Gibeah of Saul. Samuel never saw Saul again to the day of his death, but he mourned for Saul, because Yahweh repented of having made him king over Israel.

(2) *Saul's Disobedience costs him the Kingdom* (xiii. 7b-15a).

Saul was still in Gilgal, while all the people forsook him in terror. "He waited" seven days till the time "appointed by" Samuel; but when Samuel failed to appear at Gilgal, and the people "dropped away" from him, Saul ordered the burnt-offering and the peace-offerings to be brought to him, and he offered the burnt-offering. No sooner had he done so than

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[<sup>1</sup> This word was accidentally omitted in MT.—Ed.]

<sup>2</sup>—<sup>3</sup> A slight emendation.

Samuel arrived, and Saul went out to meet him and welcome him. Samuel asked him, "What have you done?" and Saul answered, "When I saw that the people were deserting me, and you had not kept your appointment, and that the Philistines were massing in Michmash, I thought to myself, 'Now the Philistines will be down upon me to Gilgal before I have secured the good-will of Yahweh,' so I took my courage in both hands and offered the burnt-offering." "You have acted foolishly," replied Samuel. "If you had but kept the injunction which Yahweh your God laid upon you, Yahweh would have confirmed your kingdom over Israel for ever. But now your kingdom shall not stand; Yahweh has looked out a man after his own heart and appointed him prince over his people, because you have disobeyed Yahweh's commandment." With this Samuel rose up, left Gilgal, and 'went his way.'



## II. SAUL AND DAVID.

(1 Sam. xvi.-2 Sam. i.)

### I. THE SECRET ANOINTING OF DAVID BY SAMUEL (1 Sam. xvi. 1-13).

*This passage seems to have been inserted by an editor as a counterpart to the anointing of Saul in ch. x. It records an incident which was evidently unknown to the writers of the following sections (see especially xvii. 13f, 28; 2 Sam. ii. 4).*

Yahweh said to Samuel: "Why do you go on mourning for Saul, when you know that I have counted him unworthy to reign over Israel? Fill your horn with oil and go; I will send you to Jesse the Bethlehemite; for I have seen in one of his sons a king to my mind." But Samuel answered, "How can I go? If Saul heard of it he would kill me." To this Yahweh replied: "Take a young cow with you, and say you have come to sacrifice to Yahweh. You will invite Jesse to the sacrifice, and then I will show you what to do, and you will anoint him whom I name to you."

So Samuel did as Yahweh directed. When he came to Bethlehem the elders of the city met him in some trepidation and asked, "Is this an auspicious visit?" He answered, "Assuredly! I have come to sacrifice to Yahweh. Sanctify yourselves, therefore, and come with me to the sacrifice." He also sanctified Jesse and his sons, and invited them to the sacrifice. When they were come, he looked at Eliab, and thought, "'Surely this is Yahweh's captain'—his anointed!" But Yahweh said to Samuel, "Do not judge by his looks, or his tall stature, for I count him unfit. What man sees is 'not what God sees.' Man looks on appearances, but Yahweh looks on the heart." Jesse then called on Abinadab, and paraded him before Samuel; but he said, "Neither is this Yahweh's choice." Jesse next presented Shammah, and Samuel said, "Nor this either." And when Jesse had thus paraded his seven sons before

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<sup>1-2</sup> A slight emendation; MT would read, "Surely before Yahweh is his anointed."

<sup>2-2</sup> Added from LXX.

Samuel, Samuel said to him, "Yahweh has not chosen any of these."

Samuel then asked Jesse, "Are these all the lads you have?" and he said, "There is still ° ° the youngest. You see, he is looking after the sheep." "Send for him at once," said Samuel. "We will not sit down to eat until he comes." So he sent and fetched him—a fair-haired boy, with beautiful eyes, and good-looking. Yahweh said, "Quick, anoint him! This is the one." Samuel accordingly took the horn of oil and anointed him in the presence of his brothers; and the spirit of Yahweh descended on David from that time onward. And Samuel got up and returned to Ramah.

## 2. DAVID'S INTRODUCTION TO SAUL'S COURT (xvi. 14-25).

Saul being now forsaken by the spirit of Yahweh, was tormented by an evil spirit sent from Yahweh. His courtiers said to him, "It is plain that some evil demon<sup>1</sup> is tormenting you. Let our lord say the word, and we your servants before you will look for a man who can play on the harp, so that when the demon is on you he may play with his hand, and you will get relief." "Do so," said Saul to his courtiers. "Seek me out some one who is a skilled harp-player, and bring him to me." One of the pages here put in his word and said: "Why, I know a son of Jesse of Bethlehem who can play the harp—[a brave and soldierly man, too]<sup>2</sup> tactful in speech, and good-looking—a man befriended by Yahweh." Accordingly Saul sent messengers to Jesse with a request that he would send him his son David [who was with the sheep].<sup>3</sup> So Jesse took five<sup>4</sup> loaves, a bottle of wine, and a kid, and sent them with David his son to Saul. David came and presented himself before Saul, and Saul conceived a great liking for him, and made him an armour-bearer. He sent a message to Jesse to say, "Let David enter my service, for he pleases me greatly." So whenever

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<sup>1</sup> "Spirit of God," i.e., superhuman spirit.

<sup>2</sup> The phrase is hardly consistent with what follows: an experienced soldier would not be reduced to the rank of an armour-bearer.

<sup>3</sup> Probably an addition.

<sup>4</sup> MT "an ms."

the demon came on Saul David would take his harp, and play, and Saul was soothed and cheered, and the evil spirit left him.

### 3. DAVID'S ENCOUNTER WITH GOLIATH (xvii. 1-xviii. 5).

*The extensive omissions in the Greek text of the original LXX, as compared with the Hebrew, enable us to disentangle two narratives in this passage. The portions common to the MT and (original) LXX form a complete narrative (A) which is at least consistent with the view that David was already a member of Saul's court, as recorded above. Putting together the sections omitted by LXX we obtain another account (B), fragmentary indeed, but obviously independent of A. It begins by introducing David to the reader, and ends with his introduction to Saul.*

#### A. (xvii. 1-11; 32-40; 42-48a; 49; 51-54).

About this time the Philistines called out their forces for war, and concentrated in Shochoh, which belongs to Judah, forming a camp between Shochoh and Azekah in Ephes-dammim (?). Saul and the men of Israel also assembled, encamping in the valley of Elah,<sup>1</sup> and drew up in battle order against the Philistines. The Philistines were posted on the heights on one side, and the Israelites on the other side, with a ravine between them.

There stepped forth from the "ranks" of the Philistines the champion,<sup>2</sup> by name Goliath of Gath, whose height was nine feet<sup>3</sup> and a span. He had a bronze helmet on his head, and wore a corslet of scale armour which weighed 220 pounds<sup>4</sup> in bronze. He had bronze greaves on his legs, and carried a bronze javelin between his shoulders. The shaft of his spear was like a weaver's beam, and its iron head was 26 pounds<sup>5</sup> in weight. His shield-bearer walked before him. Standing thus he cried to the Israelite ranks, "Why do you come out and draw up for battle? Am not I the Philistine and you servants of

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<sup>1</sup> "The Terebinth-tree."

<sup>2</sup> The meaning of the word is uncertain.

<sup>3</sup> Six cubits.

<sup>4</sup> 5,000 shekels.

<sup>5</sup> 600 shekels.

Saul? "Choose" your man, and let him come down to me! If he is able to fight and kill me, we will be slaves to you; but if I overcome and kill him, then you shall be subject to us and serve us." "I flout the armies of Israel this day," said the Philistine, "Give me a man, and let us fight one another."

As Saul and all Israel listened to these words of the Philistine, they were smitten with abject fear. But David said to Saul, "Do not lose courage, my lord; I your servant will go and fight with this Philistine." Saul answered, "You cannot go against this Philistine and fight with him. You are but a youth, and he a trained soldier from his youth." David answered, "When your servant used to be a shepherd to his father, a lion or a bear would often come and carry off a sheep from the flock; and I have gone out after him and struck him, and rescued the sheep from his mouth. And if the brute attacked me, I would seize him by the beard,<sup>2</sup> and kill him outright. Both lion and bear has your servant killed; and this uncircumcised Philistine, who has flouted the armies of the living God, shall suffer the same fate as they. Yahweh," said David, "who delivered me from the clutches of the lion and the bear, will deliver me from the hand of this Philistine." Then Saul said to David, "Go, then; and Yahweh be with you!" So Saul put his soldier's tunic on David, and a bronze helmet on his head,<sup>3</sup> and girded David with his sword over the tunic. But David <sup>4</sup>had difficulty in walking, because he had not tried it; and he said to Saul, "I cannot go in this gear, for I am not used to it." So "they" took "the armour" off him. Then, taking his staff in his hand, he picked five smooth stones from the bed of the stream, and put them in his wallet,<sup>5</sup> and with his sling in his hand he advanced towards the Philistine.

When the Philistine looked up and saw David, he regarded

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<sup>1-2</sup> LXX; MT "Let no man lose courage."

<sup>2</sup> So MT, although neither the lion nor the bear has a beard. LXX "throat."

<sup>3-3</sup> MT adds: "and clothed him in a coat of mail"; LXX omits.

<sup>4-4</sup> LXX.

<sup>5</sup> The Hebrew word occurs only here. The preceding phrase, "the shepherd's bag which he had," was probably inserted to explain it.

him with contempt, for he was but a lad [a fair-haired, handsome youth]. "Am I a dog," he cried to David, "that you attack me with a stick?" and he cursed David by his gods. "Come here to me," he went on, "and I will give your flesh to the birds of heaven, and the beasts of the field." But David answered the Philistine, "You come against me with sword and spear and javelin; but I come against you in the name of Yahweh Zebaoth, the God of the battle-ranks of Israel, which you have flouted. This day Yahweh will deliver you into my hand; I will kill you and take off your head, and give <sup>2</sup>your<sup>2</sup> dead body <sup>3</sup>and those of<sup>3</sup> the Philistine army this day to the birds of the air and the wild beasts of the earth; and all the world shall know that there is a God <sup>4</sup>in<sup>4</sup> Israel. <sup>5</sup>Yes!<sup>5</sup> all assembled here to-day shall know that not with sword or spear <sup>6</sup>is victory<sup>6</sup> gained,<sup>6</sup> but Yahweh decides the issue of battle; and he will deliver you all into our hands."

Then when the Philistine got up and came towards David, <sup>7</sup>David put his hand into the bag, took thence a stone, and slung it, hitting the Philistine with such force that the stone sunk into his forehead, and he fell prone on his face to the ground. David then—ran forward, and, standing over the Philistine, took his sword <sup>8</sup>and killed him outright, and cut off his head with it. The Philistines, seeing that their hero was dead, took to flight; and the men of Israel and Judah sprang to arms and raised the battle-shout, and pursued the Philistines as far as Gath<sup>9</sup> and the very gates of Ekron; the Philistine dead falling in the way <sup>10</sup>from Shaaraim<sup>10</sup> to Gath and Ekron. Then the Israelites turned back from the pursuit of the Philistines and looted their camp. [David took the head of the Philistine and brought it to Jerusalem, but his armour he put in his own tent.]<sup>11</sup>

B. (xvii. 12-31; 41; 48<sup>b</sup>; 50; 55-58; xviii. 1-5.)

David was a son of <sup>12</sup>an<sup>12</sup> Ephrathite of Bethlehem in Judah

<sup>1</sup> Perhaps inserted from xvi. 12.

<sup>2-3</sup> LXX.

<sup>3-8</sup> MT "and drew it from the scabbard"; LXX omits.

<sup>9</sup> So LXX; MT "the valley."

<sup>11</sup> This statement is unhistorical, since Jerusalem was not then in the possession of the Israelites.

named Jesse [who had eight sons]. The man himself <sup>2</sup>was too old for military service in the days of Saul,<sup>2</sup> but his <sup>3</sup>three<sup>3</sup> oldest sons had followed Saul to the war. The names of the three who had thus gone to the war were: Eliab the oldest, Abinadab the second, and Shammah the third: David was the youngest [and the three older had followed Saul]. [David was going and coming between being with Saul and keeping his father's sheep at Bethlehem. The Philistine drew near and took his stand morning and evening for forty days].

So Jesse said to his son David one day, "Take this bushel of parched corn for your brothers, and these ten loaves, and carry them quickly to your brothers at the camp. And these ten milk cheeses you will bring to the commander of their regiment; and see how your brothers are getting on, and take a token from them." Now Saul and they, with all the men of Israel, were in the valley of Elah, fighting with the Philistines.

Next morning David rose early, handed over the flock to a keeper, and loaded up and went as his father Jesse had bidden him. He came to the entrenchment just as the army was marching out in order of battle, and raising the war-cry; so that Israel and the Philistines were drawn up opposite to each other. So David put down his stuff in charge of the baggage-keeper, and ran to the front, and came and asked after the welfare of his brothers. As he was speaking with them, up came the champion—the Philistine, Goliath by name, from Gath—from the ranks of the Philistines, with his usual harangue, and David heard it. But all the Israelites at sight of the man fled before him in great fear. A man of Israel was heard to say, "Have you seen this man who is coming up? It is to flout Israel that he comes up! And the man who kills him the king will endow with great riches, and give him his daughter in marriage, and enfranchise his family in Israel." David said to the men standing near him, "What shall be done to the man who kills yon Philistine, and wipes out an affront from Israel?"

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<sup>2</sup> Probably inserted from ch. xvi. 12.

<sup>2-3</sup> This ingenious emendation seems to give the simplest remedy for an unintelligible text.

<sup>3</sup> Superfluous.

<sup>4</sup> The first sentence has been added to account for David's being at Bethlehem, after xvi. 21f; the second is out of place here.

Who is this uncircumcised Philistine that he should flout the armies of the living God?" The people answered in the same terms: "Such and such will be done to the man who kills him." But Eliab his oldest brother heard him talk with the men, and said angrily to David, "What in the world brings you down here? On whom have you thrown the care of those few sheep in the desert? I know your saucy and petulant temper! It is to see the battle that you have come down." "What have I done now?" said David. "Surely I may speak a word!" He turned away from him to another, and put the same question; and the people answered him as before.

But David's words found a hearing, and were reported in the presence of Saul. "They" took him . . . . .

As the Philistine drew nearer and nearer [to David],<sup>2</sup> with his shield-bearer marching before him, David ran quickly "from" the ranks to meet him. . . . . And David overcame the Philistine with a sling and a stone: he hit and killed the Philistine, although David had no sword in his hand. . . . .

Now when Saul saw David go out against the Philistine, he said to Abner his commander-in-chief, "Whose son is that stripling, Abner?" "Upon your life, king," said Abner, "I do not know." "Find out, then, whose son the youth is," said the king. So when David returned after killing the Philistine, Abner took him and introduced him to Saul, with the Philistine's head in his hand. Saul asked him, "Whose son are you, my lad?" and David answered, "I am the son of your servant Jesse of Bethlehem." . . . . .

At the end of David's conversation with Saul, Jonathan's heart was knit to David's, with a love equal to his love for himself. And Saul took him into his service that very day, and would not let him go back to his father's house. Jonathan

<sup>1</sup> What immediately followed in this narrative, it is difficult to conjecture. Luc. proceeds: "and brought him to Saul." But if Saul had had an interview with David before the fight, would he have let him go without inquiring who he was, as in v. 55?

<sup>2</sup> Better omitted; the following words show that in this account David had not yet left the ranks.

made a covenant with David, because he loved him even as he loved himself; he took off the mantle which he wore and gave it to David; also his tunic, his sword, his bow and his girdle. And David went forth: every task which Saul imposed upon him he executed successfully; so that Saul set him over the men of war; and he became a favourite with all the people, and even with the courtiers of Saul.

#### 4. SAUL'S JEALOUSY OF DAVID, AND ATTEMPTS ON HIS LIFE (xviii. 6-xx. 1a).

*In this and following sections we have a mixed collection of incidents drawn from various sources. Partly with the help of the LXX, and partly from internal indications, we can isolate a main narrative, into which secondary fragments have been inserted. In the translation secondary passages are printed with an inlet in the margin, so that the leading narrative may be read consecutively. Sections marked by the asterisk (\*) are not in the original LXX.*

xviii. 6-9. [As they came home on David's return from killing the Philistine]<sup>1</sup> the women from all the cities of Israel came out "in dances" to meet David<sup>2</sup> with tambourines and merry-making and cymbals. And the refrain of the " " women's song was

"Saul has slain his thousands;  
David his tens of thousands."

[Saul was very angry at this, and]<sup>3</sup> The affair annoyed Saul; for, said he, "They give David the tens of thousands, and to me only the thousands" [now he wants nothing but the kingdom]<sup>4</sup>! And Saul kept a spiteful eye on David from that time onward.

\*xviii. 10, 11. The next day an evil demon took possession of Saul, and he went raving mad inside the house, while David was playing on the harp, as was his daily custom. Saul had a spear in his hand, and suddenly he poised the spear, meaning to pin David to the wall with it. But David evaded it twice.

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<sup>1</sup> Wanting in LXX. The incident really belongs to a later stage of David's career.

<sup>2</sup> So LXX; MT "King Saul."



**xvii. 12-16.** Saul then, being afraid of David [—for Yahweh was with him, while he had forsaken Saul—] removed him from his presence, giving him the command of a regiment. Thus he went out and in at the head of the people. And David was successful in all his undertakings, because Yahweh was with him; and Saul, observing his great good fortune, stood in awe of him. But all Israel and Judah loved David, as he went out and in at their head.

**\*xviii. 17-19.** One day Saul said to David, "There is my elder daughter Merab! I would give her to you for a wife; only you must show yourself a man of mettle in fighting the battles of Yahweh."—Saul said this hoping that David might meet his death at the hands of the Philistines rather than at his.—But David answered, "What am I, and what are <sup>1</sup> <sup>2</sup> my father's folk in Israel, that I should aspire to be the king's son-in-law?" However, when the time came for Merab, Saul's daughter, to be given in marriage to David, she was given to another man—Adriel of Meholah.

**xviii. 20-29a.** Now Michal, Saul's daughter, fell in love with David, and when Saul was told of it, he thought it a good thing, saying to himself, "I will let him have her, and she will be the means of bringing him into the hands of the Philistines."  
<sup>3</sup> <sup>3</sup> So Saul ordered his courtiers to sound David privately by talking thus: "Look here! You stand high in the king's favour; all his court like you; why not become the king's son-in-law?" But when the courtiers talked in this strain in David's hearing, he answered, "Does it seem to you such an easy thing to be the king's son-in-law—for a poor and low-born man like me?" The courtiers reported David's words to Saul; and Saul replied, "Tell David that the king has no desire for any purchase price, other than a hundred Philistines' fore-skins, by way of taking vengeance on the king's enemies."—But Saul reckoned on David's falling by the hands of the Philistines.—The courtiers accordingly took this message to

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<sup>1</sup> Wanting in LXX.

<sup>2-3</sup> MT "my clan" (?).

<sup>3-3</sup> MT inserts a sentence not in LXX which seems to mean "And Saul said to David, 'You may now become my son-in-law twice over.'"

David, and then it seemed to him an excellent way of becoming the king's son-in-law. <sup>1</sup> So he set about it, and went out with his men, killed one hundred<sup>2</sup> of the Philistines, brought their forekins, <sup>3</sup>and counted them out in full tale<sup>3</sup> to the king, that so he might become his son-in-law. Saul then gave him his daughter Michal in marriage. But Saul saw that Yahweh was with David, and that <sup>4</sup>all Israel<sup>4</sup> loved him; and he was more afraid of David than ever.

\*xviii. 29b, 30. Saul now cherished unremitting enmity to David. But as often as the Philistine generals took the field, David scored greater successes than all the rest of Saul's servants, and his reputation stood very high.

xix. 1-10. Saul now talked with Jonathan and his whole court of having David put to death. Now Jonathan, Saul's son, had a strong affection for David;

So Jonathan told David that his father Saul meant to kill him, and said, "Be on your guard in the morning, and <sup>5</sup>keep yourself closely hidden.<sup>5</sup> I on my part will come out and stand at my father's side in the fields where you are. I will speak of you with my father, and if I note anything suspicious I will let you know."<sup>6</sup>

And he spoke well of him to Saul his father, and said, "Let the king beware of wronging his servant David, for he has never wronged you, and his actions have been greatly to your advantage. For he took his life in his hand that time when he slew the Philistine, whereby Yahweh wrought a great victory for all Israel; you saw it yourself and rejoiced. Why, then, should you incur the guilt of innocent blood, by killing David for no reason at all?" So Saul yielded to Jonathan's remonstrance, and swore an oath by the life of Yahweh that he should not be put to death. Jonathan then sent for David, and told him

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1-1 MT inserts "and the time had not expired"; not in LXX.

2 LXX; MT 200.

3-3 Luc., etc.

4-4 LXX; MT "his daughter Michal."

5-5 So LXX.

6 The preceding verses appear to have been inserted from another document.

everything; he brought him to Saul, and he was in the royal presence as of old.

But as the war was renewed David led an expedition against the Philistines and defeated them with great slaughter, putting them to flight. Then an evil spirit from Yahweh came on Saul, as he sat in his house, spear in hand. While David was playing on the harp, Saul tried to pin him to the wall with the spear. But David jumped aside before Saul, so that he stuck the spear into the wall; while David saved himself by flight.

xix. 11-17. 'That night' Saul sent agents to watch David's house, meaning to kill him in the morning. Michal his wife told David of this and said, "Unless you make good your escape this night, to-morrow you will be a dead man." So she let him down through the window, and David fled and got clear away. Michal then took the household-idol,<sup>2</sup> and laid it on the bed, with a fly-net (?)<sup>3</sup> of goats' hair at its head, and covered it with a garment; and when Saul sent messengers to seize David, she told them that he was sick. Saul sent the messengers back to see David, with orders to bring him, bed and all, that he might kill him. The messengers came, and lo! there was the idol on the bed, and the fly-net of goats' hair at its head! Saul said to Michal, "Why have you deceived me thus, letting my enemy go and make his escape?" Michal answered, "It was he who made me let him go, for he threatened to kill me."

xix. 18-xx. 1a. *David with Samuel at Ramah.*—When David had made his escape, he came to Samuel at Ramah, and told him all that Saul had done to him; and he and Samuel went and stayed in the 'prophets' quarters.<sup>4</sup> When Saul was informed that David was there, he sent emissaries to apprehend him. But when "they" saw the group of prophets in ecstatic frenzy, with Samuel presiding over them, the spirit of God came on Saul's messengers,

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<sup>1-2</sup> So LXX, etc.

<sup>2</sup> Heb. "Tetraphim."

<sup>3</sup> The meaning of the word is uncertain.

<sup>4-4</sup> Heb. "Naioth," which may be a proper name; though Ramah was hardly large enough to have another locality within it.

and they too were seized with the ecstasy. Saul, hearing of this, sent other messengers; and they were taken in the same way. Yet a third time he sent messengers; and they were seized also. At last he himself set out for Ramah, and coming to the cistern of the 'threshing-floor on the knoll,' he inquired where Samuel and David were; and was told, "Why, in the prophets' quarters in Ramah." But as he went on "from" there, the spirit of God came on him too, and he walked along in an ecstasy till he reached the prophets' quarters in Ramah. There he threw off his clothes like the rest, and raved before Samuel, till he fell down in a swoon, and lay naked all that day and all the next night. Hence arose the saying, "Is Saul also among the prophets?"

David then fled from the prophets' quarters in Ramah, and came \* \* \* \* \*

## 5. DAVID'S FLIGHT FROM SAUL'S COURT (XX. 1b-XXI. 15).

### (1) Jonathan warns David of his Danger (XX. 1b-42).

*The beginning of this narrative seems to have been lost in the process of compilation. David and Jonathan are alone together; and David—*

\* \* \* asked Jonathan to his face: "What have I done? What wrong or fault does your father think I have committed, that he seeks my life?" He replied, "Impossible! Your life is in no danger. Just consider! My father does nothing, great or small, but he takes me into his confidence: why should he hide a thing like this from me? There is nothing in this." But David still protested and said, "Your father is well aware that you are on friendly terms with me, and naturally he has said to himself, 'Jonathan must not know of this, or it would grieve him.' But as surely as Yahweh lives, and you are alive, there is just a step between me and death." Jonathan then offered to do anything that David might suggest; and David made the following proposal: "You know," he said, "that it is New Moon to-morrow, when I ought to dine with the king. Let me go, then, and hide myself outside the town till the

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2—1 So LXX, etc.

evening.<sup>1</sup> If your father misses me at all, you can say, 'David got leave from me to pay a flying visit to Bethlehem, his own city, where the annual sacrifice is to take place for all the clan.' If he then expresses himself as satisfied, I am in no danger; but if he flares up in a passion, you may be sure that he is bent on my destruction. Do me this favour, seeing you have entered into a 'solemn covenant' with your servant. Or, if any guilt lies on me, kill me yourself; but don't give me over to your father." "Heaven forbid!" exclaimed Jonathan: "If I should discover that my father is bent on destroying you, I will certainly inform you of that." "But," said David, "who will bring me word, 'in the event' of your father giving you a harsh answer?"

(*vv. 11-17. From another Source.*) \* \* \* Jonathan said to David, "Come, let us go out into the country." So they went out together. Jonathan then spoke to David as follows: "Yahweh, God of Israel, <sup>2</sup>be witness! When I sound my father about this time to-morrow, <sup>4</sup> if I find him well disposed to David, I will certainly send for you then, and make it known to you. If on the other hand my father has made up his mind to destroy you, then may God's<sup>5</sup> heaviest curse light on Jonathan, if I do not disclose it you, and let you go away in safety. And may Yahweh be with you, as he has been with my father! <sup>6</sup>Only, I ask<sup>6</sup> that as long as I am alive you will show me the kindness of Yahweh; and that if I die you will never withdraw your kindness from my house. And when Yahweh shall have cut off from the ground David's enemies to the last man, should Jonathan's 'name' be cut off from the house of David, may Yahweh exact vengeance for it at the hand of <sup>7</sup> David!" And

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<sup>1-1</sup> MT "of the third day," rightly omitted by LXX.

<sup>2-2</sup> Lit. "covenant of Yahweh."

<sup>3-3</sup> Inserted from Syr.

<sup>4-4</sup> MT "the third day."

<sup>5</sup> So LXX preserving the usual formula; MT "Yahweh's."

<sup>6-6</sup> Following LXX. The construction is very involved.

<sup>7-7</sup> MT "the enemies of."

Jonathan again 'swore to David' by his love for him ; for he loved him as his own life.

Jonathan replied, "To-morrow being New Moon, you will be missed when your seat is seen to be empty. On the third day, when you will have <sup>1</sup>'been very much missed,' come to the place where you hid yourself on the day of the Action,<sup>2</sup> and remain beside <sup>3</sup>'yonder mound. I will then on the third day<sup>4</sup> shoot arrows by the side of it, as if shooting at a mark ; and will send my lad to find the arrow.<sup>5</sup> Then if I say to the youth, "See, the arrow<sup>6</sup> is on this side of you ; take it up !" you may come, for all is well with you ; there is nothing to fear, as Yahweh lives. But if I say to the youth, "See the arrow is beyond you," then go ; for Yahweh sends you away. And as for the word which you and I have spoken to each other, Yahweh is <sup>7</sup>'the witness' between you and me for ever." So David went into hiding in-the open country.

When the New Moon came, the king took his seat at table to eat. The king sat in his usual place on the seat by the wall. Jonathan <sup>8</sup>'sat facing' him, and Abner at Saul's side, while David's place was vacant. Saul made no remark that day ; for he thought something might have happened to David to make him unclean, and he had not been able to purify himself. But the next day, the second day of the New Moon, when he noticed David's place still empty, Saul said to his son Jonathan, "Why has the son of Jesse not come to table either yesterday or to-day ?" Jonathan answered, "David asked leave of me to-go as far as Bethlehem. He said, 'Do let me go, for we have a clan sacrifice in the city, and my brothers <sup>9</sup>'have invited me.' So, if you hold me dear, let me off to see my brothers.' That is why he does not come to the royal table." Then Saul burst out in anger against Jonathan, and said, "Son of a strumpet<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>1-1</sup> LXX ; MT "made David swear."

<sup>2-2</sup> LXX.

<sup>3</sup> An allusion to some unknown episode in David's career.

<sup>4-4</sup> After LXX, etc. ; MT unintelligible.

<sup>5</sup> MT "arrows."

<sup>6-6</sup> LXX.

<sup>7</sup> Or, "a run-away slave girl."

that you are! Do I not know that you are "in league" with the son of Jesse, to your own shame and the shame of your mother's womb? For so long as the son of Jesse lives above the ground, neither you nor your kingdom is secure. Send for him at once and bring him to me; for he is deserving of death." Jonathan answered his father by asking, "Why should he be put to death? What has he done?" Then Saul hurled his spear at him to strike him. But when Jonathan saw that David's death was fully resolved on by his father, he rose from the table in hot wrath, having eaten nothing on that second day of the New Moon; for he was heart-sore for David, because his father had maligned him.

Next morning Jonathan went out into the country, to the place arranged with David, taking a young lad with him. He said to the lad, "Run, now, and find the arrow" which I shall shoot!" And as the lad ran, he shot the arrow so as to fly beyond him. When the lad came to where the arrow lay that Jonathan had shot, Jonathan called after him, "Isn't the arrow beyond you?" And again he cried after him, "Quick! Hurry up! Don't stand there!" So Jonathan's lad picked up the arrow and "brought it" to his master. But the lad knew nothing; only Jonathan and David knew what it meant. ° ° David then rose and went away, while Jonathan returned to the city.

Jonathan then handed his weapons to his lad, and bade him go and take them to the city. When the boy was gone David rose up from the side of the "mound," prostrated himself, and bowed three times to the earth. They kissed each other, and wept on each other, "and David wept longest" (?). At last Jonathan said, "Go in peace, seeing we two have sworn by the name of Yahweh, that Yahweh will be "witness" between you and me, and between your descendants and mine for evermore!"

(2) *David's Visit to Ahimelech at Nob* (xxi. 1-9).

David then came to Nob, to Ahimelech the priest. Ahimelech was alarmed by David's arrival, and said, "Why are you alone

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1-2 LXX.

\* These verses (40-42a) miss the whole point of Jonathan's signal to David, and must have been added later.

and unattended ? ” David answered, “ The king has entrusted me with a certain mission, and said that no one must know anything of the errand on which he has sent me or the business he has charged me with ; so I have ‘made an appointment with’ my men to meet me at a place I must not name. But now, “if” you have five loaves of bread to spare, give them to me, or whatever you can lay your hands on.” The priest replied, “ There is no common bread in my possession, but there is sacred bread ; have your young men at least kept themselves from women ? ” “ O certainly ! ” said David, in answer to the priest. “ Women had been taboo to us for some days when I came away, so that the men’s equipment was holy, although this is no sacred expedition ; much more are they holy in their equipment to-day (?).”<sup>2</sup> Then the priest gave him sacred bread ; for there was no bread there except the shew-bread, which is taken from Yahweh’s presence to be replaced by fresh bread on the day when it is removed.

But there was present that day one of Saul’s servants, who was under restraint before Yahweh : his name was Doeg,—an Edomite, the “most stalwart of Saul’s runners” (?).

David then said to Ahimelech, “ Have you no spear or sword at hand here ? I came away without my sword or weapons ; the king’s command was so urgent.” The priest answered, “ There is the sword of Goliath the Philistine whom you slew in the valley of Elah ; it is wrapped in a covering behind the ephod<sup>3</sup>. If you care to take that you may have it ; there is nothing else here.” “ There is none like it ! ” said David ; “ Give me it.”

### (3) *David at Gath* (xxi. 10-15).<sup>4</sup>

David set out that day on his flight from Saul, and came to Achish, king of Gath. The courtiers of Achish said to him, “ Why ! this is David, the king of the country—he of whom they used to sing, ‘ Saul has slain his thousands : David his tens of thousands ! ’ ” When David realised the import of these words he was very much afraid of Achish

<sup>1-2</sup> LXX.

<sup>2-3</sup> The interpretation of David’s answer is extremely precarious.

<sup>3</sup> See p. 13, n. 2<sup>o</sup>.

<sup>4</sup> This episode, in view of xxvii. aff, can hardly be historical.



the king of Gath. So he feigned insanity "before" them, and behaved like a madman in their hands, "banging" on the doors of the gates, and letting his saliva run down his beard. Achish said to his courtiers, "Look! You see the man is a lunatic; why do you bring him to me? Have I any lack of lunatics, that you have brought me this one to pester me with his mad antics? Would you have this man enter my house?"

## 6. DAVID'S ADVENTURES AS AN OUTLAW, HUNTED BY SAUL (xxii.-xxvi.).

### (1) *David in Adullam and Moab* (xxii. 1-5).

Departing thence, David made his escape to the mountain-fastness<sup>1</sup> of Adullam; and when his brothers and all his family connections heard of this they came down to him there. There gathered round him also all sorts of men in distress, men who were in debt, discontented men; and he became their captain. He had thus about 400 men under him.

From there he went to [Mizpeh in] Moab, and requested the king of Moab that his father and mother might "remain" with them till he should see what God would do for him. So he left them at the court of the king of Moab, and they stayed with him as long as David was in the fastness. But Gad the prophet said to David, "You must not stay in the fastness, but leave it and betake yourself to the land of Judah." So David left, and came to the forest of Hereth.

### (2) *The Massacre of the Priests of Nob* (xxii. 6-23).

In due time Saul learned that David and his men had been discovered. Now Saul was at the time holding court at Gibeah, sitting spear in hand under the tamarisk-tree<sup>2</sup> on the high-place,<sup>3</sup> with all his courtiers round him. Addressing the courtiers as they stood round him, Saul said, "Men of Benjamin, listen to me! Will the son of Jesse give all of you farms and vineyards, and make all of you commanders of regiments and companies

<sup>1</sup> MT "cave."

<sup>2-3</sup> LXX; MT "in Ramah," or "on the height (?)."

that [you have all conspired against me, and that no one let me know when my son entered into a covenant with the son of Jesse, and] that none of you <sup>2</sup>had the kindness to inform me that my son had set up my servant as a rival<sup>3</sup> to me, as is now plainly the case?" Here Doeg the Edomite, who was standing near the courtiers of Saul, spoke out and said, "I saw the son of Jesse come to Nob, to Ahimelech the son of Ahitub, who consulted Yahweh for him, and supplied him with provisions, and gave him the sword of Goliath the Philistine." Thereupon the king sent and summoned Ahimelech the son of Ahitub, the priest, and all his brethren the priesthood of Nob. When they had all come to the king, Saul said, "Hear me, son of Ahitub!" Ahimelech answered, "At your service, my lord!" Saul continued, "Why have you conspired against me with the son of Jesse, giving him food and a sword, and consulting God for him, in order that he might rise up as a rival<sup>3</sup> to me, as clearly appears to-day?" Ahimelech said in answer to the king, "Who then of all your servants was so much to be trusted as David—the king's son-in-law, the captain of your bodyguard, and honoured in your house? Or is this the first time I have consulted God for him? I repel the charge! Let the king lay no imputation on his servant [or his father's house]; for your servant has no knowledge whatever of all this." But the king replied, "You must die, Ahimelech, you and all your brethren." Then the king gave an order to his runners who were standing by him: "Come forward, and slay the priests of Yahweh; because they too are hand-in-glove with David, for when they knew that he was fleeing<sup>4</sup> from me they did not let me know." But the king's servants refused to lift a hand to strike down the priests of Yahweh. Then the king turned to Doeg with the order to come forward and strike down the priests. So Doeg the Edomite came forward and he fell on the priests, killing that day eighty-five men who wore the linen ephod.<sup>4</sup> In Nob also, the city of the priests, he (Saul?) put to the sword men and women, children and sucklings, cattle, asses and sheep.

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<sup>1-2</sup> These words are perhaps a variant reading of the following clause.

<sup>2-3</sup> LXX.

<sup>3</sup> LXX.

<sup>4</sup> See p. 13.

But one son of Ahimelech the son of Ahitub escaped: namely Abiathar, who fled after David, and told him that Saul had slain the priests of Yahweh. David said, "I knew at the time, when I saw Doeg the Edomite there, that he would be sure to tell Saul. I 'am responsible' for the lives of all your father's house. But do you remain with me, and have no fear; for the man who seeks your life seeks mine also. With me you are in safe keeping."

(3) *David relieves Keilah from the Philistines* (xxiii. 1-13).

Information then reached David that the Philistines were besieging Keilah and pillaging the threshing-floors. Thereupon he consulted Yahweh: "Shall I go and attack these Philistines?" and the answer was: "Go, and you will defeat the Philistines and relieve Keilah." But David's men objected and said, "We are in constant fear here [in Judah?]; how much more if we go to Keilah against the forces of the Philistines!" So David again consulted Yahweh, who answered, "Rise, and go down to Keilah, for I will deliver the Philistines into your hand." David then went with his men to Keilah, and fought the Philistines, and carried off their cattle, inflicting a severe defeat upon them. Thus David relieved the people of Keilah.

When Saul was told that David had come to Keilah, he said, "God has 'delivered' him into my hand; he has cut off his escape by entering a city with gates and bars." So Saul called out all the people for war, meaning to go down to Keilah and besiege David and his men. "Now when Abiathar the son of Ahimelech had fled to David, he came down to Keilah with the ephod." So when David perceived that Saul was scheming mischief against him, he said to Abiathar, "Bring the ephod here!" Then he prayed, "O Yahweh, God of Israel, thy servant has heard that Saul intends to come to Keilah, to destroy the city on my account. <sup>3</sup> <sup>3</sup> And now, will Saul come down as thy servant has heard? Yahweh, God of Israel, make it known to thy servant." Yahweh answered, "He will." David then

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<sup>1-2</sup> LXX.

<sup>2-3</sup> Transposed from the beginning of the paragraph. See p. 73.

<sup>3-3</sup> MT inserts wrongly "Will the citizens of Keilah surrender me to him?" (See next verse.) LXX omits.

asked, "Will the citizens of Keilah surrender me and my men to Saul?" Answer: "They will." On this David got up, and marched out of Keilah with his troop—about 600<sup>1</sup> men—and they went roving about wherever they could. And when Saul learned that David had escaped from Keilah he broke off the expedition.

(4) *David in Ziph and Maon* (xxiii. 14-29).

After this David remained in the wilderness in hill-fastnesses, keeping to the mountainous country [in the wilderness of Ziph]; and though Saul sought him continually God did not give him into his power.

But David was afraid, knowing that Saul was out after his life—he was at this time at Horesh in the wilderness of Ziph. But Jonathan, Saul's son, set out and went to David in Horesh, and encouraged him in the name of God, saying to him, "Have no fear! The hand of Saul my father shall never reach you; you shall yet be king over Israel, and I shall be second to you; and that my father Saul knows right well." And they two made a covenant before Yahweh. And David remained in Horesh, while Jonathan returned home.

Certain Ziphites, however, went up to Saul at Gibeah, and said, "Do you know that David is hiding in fastnesses near us in Horesh [in the hill of Hachilah, south of the Desolation]<sup>2</sup>? So, whenever it is your pleasure, O King, to come down to us, come; and we will see to it that he is delivered into the king's hands." Saul answered, "The blessing of Yahweh be on you, since you show kindly feeling for me! Go, then, and take further measures: find out <sup>3</sup>quickly<sup>4</sup> the place where his foot rests; for they tell me he is very wily. Find this out every lurking-place where he hides himself, and come back to me without fail<sup>4</sup>; and I will go with you. If he is in the country at all I will ferret him out from all the townships of Judah."

<sup>1</sup> LXX 400.

<sup>2</sup> Probably borrowed from xxvi. 1.

<sup>3</sup> Heb. "Jeshimon"—virtually a proper name.

<sup>4</sup> A variant of the preceding sentence, wanting in LXX [but probably scribal error in MT—Ed.].

So they departed and went on before Saul to Ziph. But David and his men were now in the wilderness of Maon, in the steppes to the south of the Desolation.

When Saul and his men set out to seek him, David, being informed of it, went down to the cliff <sup>1</sup>that is<sup>2</sup> in the wilderness of Maon; and Saul, as soon as he heard this, followed David into the wilderness of Maon. Saul <sup>3</sup>and his men<sup>4</sup> went by one side of the mountain; David and his men by the other: David hurrying to get away from Saul, while Saul and his men were on the point of surrounding David and his men, and capturing them. Just then a messenger brought Saul the tidings that the Philistines had invaded the country, urging him to come with all speed. So Saul left off the pursuit of David and marched against the Philistines. Hence that place gets the name of "Separation Cliff." David then went up from there, and made his abode in the fastnesses above Engedi.

(5) *At Engedi: David spares Saul's Life* (xxiv. 1-22).

When Saul returned from his campaign against the Philistines, he was told that David was in the wilderness of Engedi. Then he took 3,000 picked men out of all Israel and set out in search of <sup>5</sup>David. While his men were on the east of the Chamois Rocks, Saul himself<sup>6</sup> came to the sheepfolds on the wayside; where there is a cave into which he entered to relieve himself, not knowing that David and his men were lurking in the recesses of the cave. David's men said to him, "See! This is the day that Yahweh foretold when he said, 'I will put your enemy in your power, to do to him as you like.'" <sup>7</sup>But David answered, "God keep me from doing such a thing to my lord, the anointed of Yahweh, or laying hands on him, seeing he is Yahweh's anointed!" Thus David sharply rebuked his followers, and would not allow them to do Saul any harm. <sup>8</sup>Then he rose and secretly cut off the edge of the mantle that Saul was wearing. But afterwards David's

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<sup>1-2</sup> So LXX.

<sup>3-4</sup> LXX, etc.

<sup>5-6</sup> Or (following the punctuation of MT) "David and his men on the east of the Chamois Rocks; and."

<sup>7</sup> *V*o 5b, 6 transposed to follow 8a.

conscience smote him for having cut off the edge of Saul's "mantle."

So when Saul had risen and left the cave and gone along the road, David rose after him, and stepping out of the cave called after Saul, "My lord king!" Saul looked behind him, and David bowed in homage with his face to the ground, and spoke thus to Saul: "Why do you listen to the talk of those who say that David wants to harm you? You have seen this day with your own eyes how when Yahweh put it in my power <sup>1</sup> to kill you in the cave <sup>2</sup> I refused to do it. <sup>3</sup> I spared you and said, 'I will not lay my hand on my lord, because he is the anointed of Yahweh.' See, my father! Here is a piece of your mantle in my hand. Since I cut off the edge of your mantle when I might have killed you, you may know for certain that there is neither malice nor treason in my heart; I have never wronged you, although you are watching your opportunity to take my life. Let Yahweh judge between you and me; let Yahweh avenge me upon you; but my hand shall not be against you. <sup>4</sup> And, after all, on whom is the king of Israel making war? Whom are you hunting? A dead dog! A solitary flea! May Yahweh be judge and decide between us! May he see to it, and maintain my cause, and vindicate my right against you!"

When David stopped speaking thus to Saul [Saul said, "Is that your voice, David, my son?"<sup>5</sup>] Saul wept aloud, and said to David, "You are in the right, and I in the wrong; for ~~you~~ have done a good turn to me, while I have done you harm. And you have this day <sup>6</sup> put the crown on all <sup>7</sup> your goodness to me, by refraining from killing me, when Yahweh had put me in your power. When a man has his enemy at his mercy, does he send him safely on his way? May Yahweh reward you richly for what you have done to me to-day! And now I know that you will undoubtedly be king, and that through you

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<sup>1-2</sup> So LXX.

<sup>3-4</sup> "As the old proverb has it: From the wicked proceeds wickedness, but my hand shall not be against you." The verse has been inserted by a scribe who thought he knew the old saying quoted in David's last words.

<sup>5</sup> Taken from xxvi. 17.

<sup>6-7</sup> MT, "declared."

the realm of Israel will be strengthened. Swear to me, therefore, by Yahweh, that you will not root out my offspring after me, nor efface my name from my father's house." David swore thus to Saul; and Saul went home; but David and his men went up to the fastness.

(6) *David spares Saul's Life at the Hill of Hachilah (xxvi.)—a parallel narrative to (5).*

The Ziphites came to Saul at Gibeah with the news that David was hiding 'near them' [in the hill of Hachilah, facing the Desolation]. So Saul went down at once to the wilderness of Ziph, taking with him 3,000 picked men of Israel, to hunt for David in the wilderness of Ziph. Saul encamped on the hill of Hachilah, facing the Desolation, on the road, while David kept to the wilderness. And seeing that Saul had followed him to the wilderness, David sent out spies, and ascertained beyond doubt that Saul had come. Thereupon David got up and came to the place <sup>2</sup>[where Saul was encamped; and having seen the place] where Saul was lying asleep with Abner the son of Ner, his commander-in-chief—Saul was lying within the entrenchment, and the troops camping around him—he spoke to Ahimelech the Hittite, and Abishai the son of Zeruiah, Joab's brother, and said, "Which of you will go down with me to Saul in the camp?" Abishai answered, "I will." So David and Abishai came to the army by night; and there was Saul lying asleep within the entrenchment, with his spear stuck in the ground at his head, and Abner and the men sleeping around him. Said Abishai to David, "God has given your enemy into your hand this day! I will just pin him to the earth with his own spear—a single stroke; no more!" David answered Abishai, "You must not murder him; for who ever laid hands on Yahweh's anointed and was held guiltless? By the life of Yahweh, no!" he continued. "Either Yahweh will smite him, or he will die a natural death, or he will fall in battle; but the Lord forbid that I should

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<sup>1-1</sup> LXX.

<sup>2-2</sup> Omitted by LXX.

put forth my hand against the anointed of Yahweh ! Meanwhile, take the spear that is at his head and the water-jug, and let us be off." So they "took" the spear and the jug from Saul's head and came away. And no one saw or heard or woke up ; for they were all plunged in a deep slumber caused by Yahweh.

David then crossed to the opposite side of the valley, and standing at a distance on the top of the hill, so that a great space lay between, he shouted to the people and to Abner the son of Ner : " Why don't you answer, Abner ? " Abner called back, " Who are you, calling up the king ? " David answered, " You are a fine man ! The like of you is not in Israel ! Why then have you not kept watch over your lord the king ? Why ! one of the people has come through to murder the king, your master. It is not a very soldierlike thing, this that you have done ! By the life of Yahweh, but you all deserve death for not guarding your master, the anointed of Yahweh. Look now where the king's spear is, and where the water-jug, that were at his head."

But Saul now recognised David's voice, and said, " Is that your voice, David my son ? " " It is, my lord king ! " answered David. " Why," he went on, " does my lord pursue his servant ? What have I done ? What evil is there in my hands ? Let the king, then, listen to what his servant has to say : If it be Yahweh who has incited you against me, let him be appeased by an offering ; but if it be men who have done it, may they be accursed before Yahweh ; for they have expelled me this day from the fellowship of Yahweh's people, and said in effect, ' Away ! serve other gods.' But now, let not my blood be spilt on the earth far from the presence of Yahweh ; for the king of Israel has come out to hunt 'for my life, as the hawk' hunts the partridge in the mountains." Saul said : " I have sinned ! Come back, my son David ; I will not harm you any more, since you have prized my life highly this day. Oh, I have acted foolishly, and gone very far astray ! " David said in reply, " Here is the king's spear :

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— So LXX ; MT " a single flea, as one."



let one of the young men come over and fetch it. And Yahweh will reward every man according to his rectitude and his fidelity; when Yahweh put you in my power this day, I would not lay my hand on the anointed of Yahweh. As precious as your life was to me this day, so precious may mine be to Yahweh, and may he rescue me from every danger!" Saul said to David, "God bless you, my son David! You will certainly succeed in all you undertake."

David then went his way, and Saul returned home.

(7) *David and Nabal* (xxv.).

[About this time Samuel died, and all Israel assembled and mourned for him, and he was buried in his own house at Ramah. David went down to the wilderness of Maon.']

Now in Maon there was a man who had a farm at Carmel—a man of substance, owning 13,000 sheep and 1,000 goats—and for the time he was at the sheep-shearing in Carmel. The man's name was Nabal, and his wife's name Abigail; the woman was sensible and good-looking, but the man was rude and ill-natured—a regular Calebite.

David, then, having heard in the wilderness that Nabal was shearing his sheep, sent ten young men with the following instructions: "Go up to Carmel; get an interview with Nabal, and give him my compliments. <sup>2</sup>Address him as my brother,<sup>2</sup> and say, 'Good luck to you, and good luck to your household, and to all that is yours! I have just heard that you are engaged in sheep-shearing. Now your shepherds have been in our neighbourhood, and we have not ill-used them, nor have they lost anything all the time they have been in Carmel. Ask your servants, and they will tell you that it is so. Look kindly therefore, on these young men—all the more that we come at a festive season—and give whatever you can lay your hand on <sup>3</sup>to your servants, and <sup>3</sup>to your son David.'" David's men came and delivered this message to Nabal in David's name, and paused for his reply. But all the answer they got from Nabal was, "Who is David? Who is the son of Jesse? There are

<sup>1</sup> LXX; MT "Paran."

<sup>2-3</sup> An obscure expression.

<sup>3-3</sup> Some texts of LXX omit these words.

many servants now-a-days who break loose from their masters. And I, forsooth, must take my bread and wine,<sup>1</sup> and the beasts I have slaughtered for my own shearers, and give them to men as to whom I do not know where on earth they have come from!" Upon this David's men took their way back to David, and told him all that had happened. David then gave the order to his men, "Every man gird on his sword!" So they all girt on their swords, and David did the same; and they marched out after David some 400 strong, while 200 remained with the baggage.

In the meantime one of the servants had told Abigail, Nabal's wife; "Look here! David has sent messengers from the wilderness to salute our master, and he has fallen out with them. And really the men were very good to us; we were not molested, nor did we miss anything all the time we were in their company while we were on the moors. They were like a wall round us by day and by night as long as we were near them tending the flocks. Now consider and see what is to be done; for ruin threatens our master and all his household. As for him, he is such a fiend that there is no speaking to him."

Abigail then hurriedly got together 200 loaves of bread, two skins of wine, five sheep ready for cooking, five pecks<sup>2</sup> of parched corn, 100 bunches of raisins and 200 fig-cakes, and put them on asses, telling the servants to go on before her, and she would follow. But to her husband Nabal she said not a word.

As she was riding down on her ass under cover of the hill, David and his men were marching down opposite to her, so that she came upon them suddenly. Now David had been thinking, "For nothing at all I have guarded the whole of this man's property in the wilderness, so that nothing belonging to him was lost; and now he returns evil for my good. May God's heaviest vengeance light on <sup>3</sup> David, if I leave a single male of his by morning light!"

Now when Abigail saw David, she dismounted quickly from her ass, and fell <sup>4</sup>on her face before him<sup>4</sup> in humble deference.

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<sup>1</sup> LXX; MT "waters."

<sup>2</sup> "Seahs" (one-third of an Ephah).

<sup>3-3</sup> MT wrongly inserts "the enemies of," omitted by LXX.

<sup>4-4</sup> LXX.

Throwing herself at his feet she said, "On me alone, my lord, be the guilt! Let your handmaid speak to you freely, and pray hear what she has to say. My lord should pay no heed to this vile creature Nabal, who is just what his name says—Nabal (churl) he is by name, and churl by nature—and I, your handmaid, did not see the young men whom my lord sent. [Truly, my lord, as surely as Yahweh lives, ° ° who has kept you from incurring bloodguilt and taking your revenge into your own hand, I could wish that your enemies and those who seek to injure my lord might be as Nabal.] And now, this present which your maidservant has brought for my lord—let it be given to the young men who accompany my lord. Forgive your handmaid her offence; for Yahweh will assuredly build for my lord a lasting dynasty, because you are fighting the battles of Yahweh, and no wickedness will be found in you all your days. And "should a man arise" to persecute you and seek your life, may my lord's soul be bound up in the bundle of life with Yahweh your God, while he slings away the souls of your enemies as from the pouch of a sling! *Then*—when Yahweh brings to pass all the good which he has promised you, and appoints you prince over Israel—then my lord's conscience will be clear of the compunction and remorse that would follow shedding blood unnecessarily, and seeking redress "by his own hand." And when Yahweh brings good fortune to my lord, think of your handmaid."

David replied to Abigail, "All praise to Yahweh the God of Israel, for sending you to meet me this day! Blessings also on your good sense and on yourself, who have kept me back this day from the guilt of bloodshed, and from taking my revenge into my own hand! But truly, by the life of Yahweh the God of Israel, who has kept me from doing you harm, if you had not come so promptly to meet me, there would not have been left a single male of Nabal's by morning light." David then accepted the present she had brought for him, saying to herself, "Go home in peace! See, I yield to your request, and have treated you with respect."

When Abigail got back to Nabal, she found him feasting like

<sup>1</sup>—This sentence comes in prematurely.

<sup>2</sup>—<sup>3</sup> Inserted from LXX.

a king in his house, and in a very jovial mood ; but as he was very drunk she said nothing to him till the next day. In the morning, when Nabal had slept off his debauch, and his wife told him what had happened, 'he had an apoplectic fit,' and lay like a stone. About ten days later, Yahweh sent a stroke on Nabal, and he died.

On hearing of Nabal's death David exclaimed, "Blessed be Yahweh who has avenged the insult done to me by Nabal, and held back his servant from doing wrong ; but has caused Nabal's wickedness to recoil on his own head !" Then he sent and paid his addresses to Abigail with a view to marriage. And when David's men came to Abigail at Carmel, and told her that David had sent them to take her home as his wife, she rose, bowed her face to the ground, and said, "Why ! Your hand-maid is ready to be a slave-girl to wash the feet of my lord's servants." So she rose quickly, and, riding on an ass, accompanied by her five maids on foot, she followed David's messengers, and became his wife.

Now David had already married Ahinoam of Jezreel, so he had them both for wives. But Saul had given his daughter Michal, whom David had married, to Palti the son of Laish, from Gallim.

## 7. DAVID AMONG THE PHILISTINES (1 Sam. xvii.-2 Sam. i.).

### (1) *David becomes a Vassal of Achish of Gath* (xvii.).

David at last came to the conclusion that sooner or later he must fall into the hands of Saul. "The best I can do," he said to himself, "is to make my escape to the Philistine territory ; then Saul in despair will abandon the search for me within the borders of Israel, and I shall escape from his power." David set out accordingly, and with his 600<sup>a</sup> men went over to Achish the son of Maach, king of Gath. So David and his men resided with Achish in Gath ; each man with his family, and David with his two wives, Ahinoam of Jezreel, and Abigail the widow of Nabal of Carmel. And Saul, being informed of David's flight to Gath, searched for him no more.

<sup>1</sup>—<sup>1</sup> Or, "all spirit died out of him, and he lay . . ."; lit., "his heart died within him."

<sup>a</sup> LXX, etc., "400."

After a time David said to Achish, "If you are pleased with me, let me have quarters assigned to me in one of the provincial towns, where I may settle; why should your servant live so near you in the capital of the kingdom?" So Achish gave him Ziklag at that time; hence Ziklag belongs to the kings of Judah to this day.

The whole time that David spent in Philistine territory was a year and four months. During this period he and his men went out and raided the "Gizrites and Amalekites, these being the peoples inhabiting the region that extends "from Telam" towards Shur, as far as the land of Egypt. And every time that David raided their land he left neither man nor woman alive, but carried off sheep and cattle, asses and camels, and clothing; and returned with them to Achish. If Achish then asked, "Where have you made a raid to-day?" David would answer, "On the Negeb of Judah," or, "On the Negeb of the Jerahmeelites," or, "On the Negeb of the Kenites." David's reason for sparing neither man nor woman to bring home to Achish was his fear that they might give information against him and his men. "Thus David acted," and this was his custom all the time he stayed in the country of the Philistines. So Achish trusted David, thinking "He has brought himself into disfavour with his countrymen of Israel; now he will remain my vassal for ever."

(2) *David narrowly escapes having to fight against his own Country* (xxviii. 1, 2; xxix).

At this time the Philistines mustered their forces for war against Israel. Achish said to David, "You understand that you and your men take the field with me in the army." "Quite so!" replied David, "now you shall see what your servant can do." "Good!" said Achish, "for this I make you <sup>3</sup>head of my bodyguard<sup>3</sup> permanently."

So the Philistines brought their whole force together at Aphek, while the Israelites encamped at the well in Jezreel. Now as the Tyrants<sup>4</sup> of the Philistines marched past with their

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<sup>2-1</sup> MT "Geshurites and the."

<sup>2-2</sup> So MSS of LXX; MT "from of old."

<sup>3-3</sup> Lit. "keeper of my head."

<sup>4</sup> See note 4, p. 19.

companies and regiments, David and his men bringing up the rear under Achish, the Philistine officers said, "What are these Hebrews doing here?" Achish answered them, "Why, this is David, the servant of Saul, king of Israel, who has been with me for a year or <sup>two</sup>; and I have found nothing amiss in him from the day he joined <sup>me</sup> till now." But the Philistine officers got angry with him, and said, "Send the man back! Let him return to the quarters you have assigned to him; but he shall not go into battle with us, or he will <sup>play</sup> the traitor to us in the battle. What better way could such a man find to ingratiate himself with his sovereign than with the heads of these men of ours? Do you forget that this is the David of whom they used to sing in dances:

‘Saul has slain his thousands,  
David his tens of thousands’?”

So Achish called David, and said to him, "As Yahweh lives, I believe in your honour, and it would please me well if you could go in and out with me in the camp; for I have found no fault in you from the time you came to me to this day. But you are not in favour with the Tyrants. So now turn back, and go away peaceably, and do not give offence to the Tyrants of the Philistines." David said to Achish, "But what have I done? What have you found in your servant from the day I entered your service till now, that I may not come with you and fight against the enemies of your majesty?" Achish answered, "<sup>You</sup> know that in my eyes you are good as the Angel of God! Only, the Philistine officers have said that you must not go into battle with them. So now you will get up early in the morning, you and the servants of your sovereign who have come with you, <sup>and</sup> go to the place I have assigned to you. Cherish no ill-will in your heart—for I esteem you highly<sup>a</sup>—but just rise in the morning as soon as it is light, and go away." So David and his men rose early in the morning, to depart for the land of the Philistines; while the Philistines moved up to Jezreel.

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<sup>1—1</sup> Lit. "be a Satan to us."

<sup>2—2</sup> Inserted from LXX, etc.

(3) *David punishes the Amalekites for the Sack of Ziklag (LXX.).*

By the time David and his men reached Ziklag on the third day, the Amalekites had made a raid on the Negeb [and Ziklag], and had sacked Ziklag and burned it. They had made captives of the women <sup>2</sup>and all<sup>1</sup> who were in it, young and old, not killing any of them, but carrying them off when they departed. So David and his men came to the city, only to find it burned to the ground, and their wives, sons and daughters carried into captivity; and they broke into loud lamentations, and wept till they could weep no more. [David's two wives had been taken captive—Abinoam of Jezreel and Abigail the widow of Nabal the Carmelite.] David now found himself in a very difficult position; for his followers spoke of stoning him, in the bitterness of their grief for their sons and daughters. But David kept his courageous trust in Yahweh his God; and said to Abiathar the priest, the son of Ahimelech, "Bring the ephod<sup>3</sup> to me here!" When Abiathar had done so, David put the question to Yahweh, "Shall I pursue this horde? Can I overtake them?" Yahweh answered, "Pursue them; for you will certainly overtake them and recover your property."

So David set out with the 600 men he had, and came to the watercourse of Besor ° °. Thence he continued the pursuit with 400 men, leaving behind 200 who were too exhausted to cross the watercourse. Then they found an Egyptian lying on the plain and brought him to David. They gave him some bread and water and a piece of fig-cake<sup>3</sup> and two bunches of raisins<sup>3</sup>; and when he had eaten he revived; for he had been without food or water for three days and three nights. David then asked him, "To whom do you belong, and where do you come from?" and he answered, "I am an Egyptian youth, the slave of an Amalekite, and my master abandoned me because I was taken ill three days ago. We had made an incursion into the Negeb of the Crethi [and that which belongs to Judah], and the Negeb of the Calebites; and we burned down Ziklag." David said to him, "Will you guide me to these robbers?" He answered, "If you will swear to me by God

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<sup>1</sup>—<sup>1</sup> So LXX.

<sup>2</sup> See p. 13.

<sup>3</sup>—<sup>3</sup> Omitted in LXX.

that you will neither kill me nor give me up to my master, I will guide you to them."

When he had guided him down to them, there they were, spread over the whole country-side, eating and drinking and merrymaking, on account of the huge spoil they had taken from the land of the Philistines and Judah. So David routed them from dawn to evening, <sup>o</sup>and put them to the ban<sup>o</sup>; so that none escaped except 400 young men who were mounted on camels and fled. Thus David recovered all that the Amalekites had taken [also he recovered his two wives]; and nothing was missing whether of the spoil or the sons and daughters, or anything they had taken—it was all brought back by David. <sup>o</sup>They<sup>o</sup> took all the sheep and cattle, <sup>1</sup>and drove them before him,<sup>1</sup> crying, "This is David's booty."

When David returned to the 200 men who had been left behind at the watercourse of Besor because they were too exhausted to follow him, they came out to meet David and his company, and <sup>2</sup>as they drew near the army they saluted them.<sup>2</sup> But all the ill-disposed and worthless men among those who had gone with David spoke up and said, "Since these men did not go with us we will not give them any of the spoil we have recovered, except to each his wife and children; let them take these and go!" But David said, "You shall not act so, <sup>3</sup>after<sup>3</sup> Yahweh has given us so much, and preserved us, and delivered into our hand the horde that attacked us. Who would agree with you in this? No! The share of him who goes into battle shall be the same as his who remains to guard the baggage: they shall divide equally!" And so it has been ever since: he made it law and custom in Israel to this day.

When David came to Ziklag he sent part of the spoil to the elders of Judah <sup>o</sup>and<sup>o</sup> to his friends, with the message, "A present for you from the spoil of Yahweh's enemies!" He did so to those in <sup>4</sup>Bethuel,<sup>4</sup> in <sup>o</sup>Ramah<sup>o</sup> of the Negeb, in Jattir,

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<sup>1-1</sup> MT "they drove them before those cattle."

<sup>2-2</sup> So LXX partly; MT "David drew near the people with a friendly greeting."

<sup>3-3</sup> LXX.

<sup>4-4</sup> See 1 Chr. iv. 30; MT "Bethel."



in 'Arara' (?), in Siphemoth, in Eshtemoa, in 'Carmel,' in the cities of the Jerahmeelites and Kenites, in Hormah, in Bor-ashan, in Athach, and in Hebron—and to all the places where David and his men had sojourned.

(4) *Saul and the Witch of Endor* (xxviii. 3-25).

*This passage interrupts the natural connection between xxviii. 2 and xxix. 1; and must be derived from a different source.*

By this time Samuel had died; all Israel had gone into mourning for him, and had buried him in his city of Ramah. [Saul, moreover, had suppressed the necromancers and soothsayers throughout the land.]<sup>3</sup>

The Philistines now assembled their forces and entered the land, and encamped in Shunem; while Saul called all Israel together and pitched his camp on Gilboa. But when Saul saw the camp of the Philistines his heart trembled with fear. He tried to consult Yahweh, but Yahweh gave him no answer, either by dream or by priestly oracle, or by prophet. Saul then commanded his servants to seek out a woman who could conjure up the dead, that he might go and consult her. His servants said to him, "There is such a woman at Endor."

Saul then, having disguised himself and put on other clothes, set out with two attendants, and came to the woman by night, and said to her, "Conjure for me by your ghost, and bring up some one whom I shall name." But the woman answered, "Surely you know what Saul has done—how he has hunted down the necromancers and soothsayers in the land! Why do you lay a trap for me, to bring about my death?" Saul then swore to her: "As Yahweh lives, there shall no punishment fall on you in this case." The woman then asked, "Whom do you wish me to call up?" and Saul answered, "Call me up Samuel." But when the woman saw 'Samuel' she screamed out and

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<sup>1-2</sup> See Josh. xv. 22.

<sup>2-3</sup> So LXX; MT "Rachal."

<sup>3</sup> Perhaps added by an editor in view of v. 9.

<sup>4-4</sup> Some read "Saul," with a few MSS of LXX.

said to Saul, "Why have you deceived me, when you are Saul himself?" The king answered, "Do not be afraid! What have you seen?" She said, "I saw a spirit<sup>1</sup> rising out of the earth." "What is he like?" "It is an old man coming up, wrapped in a mantle." Then Saul knew that it was Samuel, and bowed with his face to the ground in reverence.

Samuel said, addressing Saul, "Why have you disturbed me by calling me up?" Saul replied, "I am in sore distress! The Philistines are attacking me; God has thrown me off, and no longer answers me, either by prophet or by dream. Therefore I have called you, hoping you would show me what I should do." Samuel said, "But why do you ask me, when Yahweh has forsaken you and become your 'enemy'? Yahweh has done to 'you' what he threatened through me: he has torn the kingdom from you and given it to another, to David. Because you disobeyed the command of Yahweh, and failed to execute his fierce wrath on Amalek, therefore has Yahweh done this to you to-day. [And Yahweh will deliver Israel also, as well as you, into the hand of the Philistines; and] To-morrow you and your sons will be with me; Yahweh will also deliver the army of Israel into the hand of the Philistines." At this Saul, "in utter despair," fell full length on the ground, completely terrified by the words of Samuel; and indeed he had no strength in him, for he had eaten nothing all that day and all night.<sup>2</sup>

Then the woman approached Saul, and seeing that he was quite unmanned, she said to him: "Listen! Your handmaid has complied with your request: I have risked my life in obeying the command you laid upon me; now do you be prevailed on by me, and let me tempt you with a morsel of food, that you may eat, and have strength to resume your journey." But he refused and said, "I will not eat." But when urged by his servants, as well as the woman, he yielded to their persuasion, and rose from the ground, and seated himself on the bed. Now the woman

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<sup>1</sup> Lit. "a god."

<sup>2-3</sup> LXX; MT "hastily."

had a stall-fed calf in the house, and she hastily killed it; then she got some meal and kneaded it, and baked unleavened cakes. This she set before Saul and his attendants; and after they had eaten they rose and went their way the same night.

(5) *Saul's Last Battle* (xxxi.).

Meanwhile<sup>1</sup> the Philistines "had joined" battle with Israel; the Israelites had been put to flight by the Philistines; and the slain lay thick on Mount Gilboa. The Philistines pressed hard on Saul and his sons; they killed Jonathan, Abinadab, and Malchishua, the sons of Saul. Fiercely the battle raged against Saul, till the archers "° found him, and "he was wounded in the abdomen." Then Saul said to his armour-bearer, "Draw your sword and run me through with it, lest these uncircumcised dogs come "and" make sport of me." But the armour-bearer was too much afraid to do it, and refused; so Saul took his own sword and threw himself upon it. When the armour-bearer saw that Saul was dead, he also threw himself on his sword, and died by his side. Thus died Saul and his three sons and his armour-bearer<sup>3</sup> together on the same day. And when the Israelites "in the cities" of the valley (of Jezreel), and "in those" on the Jordan saw that the army of Israel had fled, and Saul and his sons were dead, they forsook the cities and fled; and the Philistines came and occupied them.

On the morrow the Philistines came to strip the slain, and found Saul and his three sons lying on Mount Gilboa. They cut off his head and stripped off his armour; and sent them round the Philistine territory, to carry the good news to<sup>5</sup> their idols and their people. They put Saul's armour in the temple of Astarte; and his body they "hung" on the wall of Bethshean.

But when the citizens of Jabesh in Gilead heard what the Philistines had done to Saul, they arose, every fighting man of

<sup>1</sup> Referring back to ch. xxx.

<sup>2-3</sup> So LXX; MT "he was in anguish from the archers."

<sup>3-3</sup> MT "also all his men"; not in LXX.

<sup>4-4</sup> MT "on the other side" (twice); omitted in 1 Chron. x. 7).

<sup>5-5</sup> So LXX, etc. (see 1 Chron. x. 9); MT inserts "the temple of."

them, and after marching all night they took down the bodies of Saul and his sons from the wall of Bethshean, and "brought them" to Jabesh; "and burned them there." Then they took their bones and buried them under the tamarisk-tree<sup>3</sup> in Jabesh; and fasted seven days.

(6) *How David received the Tidings of Saul's Death* (2 Sam. i. 1-16).

*In these verses two narratives seem to be mixed up, of which the first (in vv. 1-4, 11, 12) gives an account of the battle quite consistent with the preceding chapter. The second gives an entirely different account of Saul's death (vv. 6-10), (agreeing, however, with 2 Sam. iv. 9, 10); and as there is no hint that the story told by the Amalekite is a lie, we must suppose that it embodies another tradition regarding the manner of Saul's death. We may divide them as follows:—*

A. i. (vv. 1-4; 11, 12).

On the third day after Saul's death, when David had returned from his defeat of the Amalekites, and had spent two days in Ziklag, there came a man from the camp [from Saul], with his clothes torn and earth on his head. When he came to David, he threw himself on the ground and did homage to him. David said to him, "Where have you come from?" and he answered, "I am a fugitive from the camp of Israel." "How have things gone?" asked David, "Tell me, pray." He said, "Our people have fled from the battle-field; many of the soldiers have fallen; Saul also and his son Jonathan are dead." Then David took hold of his clothes and tore them, as did all the men that were with him. And they wailed and wept and fasted till the evening, for Saul and his son Jonathan, and the people of Yahweh<sup>4</sup> because they had fallen by the sword.

B. ii. (vv. 5-10; 13-16).

• • • • David said to the young man who had brought the news, "How do you know that Saul and his son Jonathan are dead?" The youth replied, "By mere

<sup>1-2</sup> So 1 Chron. x. 12; LXX, etc.

<sup>2-3</sup> Omitted in 1 Chr. x. Some would read "and wailed for them there."

<sup>3</sup> 1 Chr. x. 12 "terebinth."

<sup>4-4</sup> MT adds "and the house of Israel."

chance I happened to be on Mount Gilboa, and there I found Saul leaning on his spear, while the chariots and  
 \* \* horsemen pressed closely on him. Turning round and seeing me, he called me; and I answered, 'What is it?' He then asked me who I was, and I said, 'I am an Amalekite.' Then he said, 'Stand over me, and kill me outright; for the death-throes are on me, although my soul is still whole within me.' So I stood over him and despatched him; for I knew that he could not survive his fall. And I took the diadem from his head, and the armlet from his arm, and have brought them here to my lord."

David then asked the young man who had brought the news, "Where do you come from?" to which he answered, "I am an Amalekite—the son of a protected guest." Said David, "What? Were you not afraid to raise your hand to slay the anointed of Yahweh?" Then, calling on one of his soldiers, he said, "Here! Strike him down!" So the soldier struck him dead. David said to him, "Your blood be on your own head; for your own mouth gave evidence against you when you said, 'It was I who killed the anointed of Yahweh.'"

(7) *David's Lament over Saul and Jonathan* (i. 17-27).

David composed the following elegy on Saul and his son Jonathan—[it is contained in the Book of Jasher, that the sons of Judah might learn it].<sup>1</sup> He said:—

"Alas" for thy chivalry, Israel!  
 On thy heights it lies slain.  
 How are the heroes fallen  
 \* In the thick of the battle!"

Make it not known in Gath,  
 Nor tell it in Ashkelon's streets;  
 Lest Philistia's daughters rejoice—  
 The girls of the heathen<sup>3</sup> make merry!

<sup>1</sup> Transposing the order of clauses, and (with LXX) omitting the word "bow."

<sup>2-3</sup> A line added from v. 25.

<sup>3</sup> Strictly "uncircumcised."

Ye hills of Gilboa ! Nor dew descend,  
Nor rain fall on you, 'ye fields of death !<sup>1</sup>  
For there was the heroes' shield defiled—<sup>2</sup>  
    <sup>3</sup>The weapons of one anointed<sup>3</sup> with oil—  
With the blood of the slain, the fat of the mighty.

Bow of Jonathan ne'er turned back,  
Nor sword of Saul came empty home.  
Saul and Jonathan ! The loved and the lovely !  
In death, as in life, unsevered :  
Than eagles more swift, than lions more strong !

Ye daughters of Israel ! Weep for Saul,  
Who clothed you in purple and "silk" ;  
Who braided your raiment with gold.

How are the heroes fallen  
In the thick of the fight !  
    <sup>4</sup>Jonathan on thy heights is slain !<sup>4</sup>

I am grieved for thee, O Jonathan, brother !  
Right dear wert thou to me.  
Thy love to me was wonderful,  
More than the love of woman.

How are the heroes fallen,—  
Perished the weapons of war !

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<sup>1</sup>—<sup>1</sup> Or, "ye fields of deceit" ; both being emendations of MT.

<sup>2</sup>—<sup>2</sup> MT adds "the shield of Saul."

<sup>3</sup>—<sup>3</sup> MT has a negative particle (a difference of one letter), i.e., "of one not anointed."

<sup>4</sup>—<sup>4</sup> Text uncertain. Luc., etc., read "Jonathan, thou art wounded to death" ; which might easily be emended to "Jonathan, I grieve for thy death,"—a possible variant of the next line.

### III. DAVID.

(2 Sam. ii.-xxiv.)

#### I. DAVID AS KING OF JUDAH (ii. 1-v. 5).

##### (1) *His Anointing in Hebron* (ii. 1-7).

After this David inquired of Yahweh: "Shall I go up into one of the cities of Judah?" Yahweh's response being favourable, David asked, "To which city?" and the answer was "To Hebron." To Hebron accordingly David went up, with his two wives, Ahinoam of Jezreel and Abigail the widow of Nabal the Carmelite. The men of his company he brought up also, each with his family; and they settled in the cities round Hebron. Then the men of Judah came and anointed David there as king over the house of Judah.

On hearing that the inhabitants of Jabesh Gilead had buried Saul, David sent envoys to the rulers<sup>1</sup> of that city with this message: "The blessing of Yahweh be on you for this gracious service you have rendered to your master Saul by burying him! May Yahweh show you constant favour; and I on my part will requite you with benefits<sup>2</sup> for having done this thing. Now then, take courage, and be brave men; though your master Saul is dead, the house of Judah have anointed me as king over them."

##### (2) *The Contest between David and Eshbaal* (ii. 8-iv. 12).

###### (a) ii. 8-11. *Eshbaal crowned at Mahanaim.*

Now Abner the son of Ner, Saul's commander-in-chief, had taken Eshbaal,<sup>3</sup> Saul's son, and brought him over to Mahanaim, where he made him king over Gilead and Asher,<sup>3</sup> Jezreel, Ephraim and Benjamin: that is to say over all Israel; <sup>4</sup> <sup>4</sup> only the house of Judah acknowledged David. <sup>5</sup> <sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> LXX; MT "men."

<sup>2</sup> MT "Ishbosheth"; and so throughout. The original name is preserved in 1 Chr. viii. 39. For the word Baal, on account of its heathenish associations, the scribes substituted a word meaning "shameful thing."

<sup>3</sup> MT "the Ashurites."

<sup>4-4</sup> *V. 10a*: "Forty years old was Eshbaal, Saul's son, when he became King over Israel; and he reigned two years."

<sup>5-5</sup> *V. 11*: "The time that David reigned over the house of Judah in Hebron was seven years and six months."

Then Abner the son of Ner set out from Mahanaim with the soldiers of Eshbaal, Saul's son, "and came" to Gibeon; while Joab the son of Zeruiah with David's men marched out "from Hebron." The two armies met at the pool of Gibeon<sup>1</sup> "and halted, one on this side of the pool and the other on that. Said Abner to Joab, "Let the lads stand up, and show us some warlike sport." "Agreed!" said Joab. So there stood up and were told off by number twelve from Benjamin, belonging to Eshbaal the son of Saul, and twelve of David's men. Then each man seized his opponent by the hair of his head "with one hand,"<sup>2</sup> and with the other plunged his sword in his opponent's side, so that they fell dead together. Hence that place was named "The field of Sides"<sup>3</sup> (i), which is at Gibeon.

In the fierce battle that ensued that day, Abner and the men of Israel were worsted by David's soldiers. Now there were three sons of Zeruiah, Joab, Abishai and Asahel; and Asahel was fleet-footed as any gazelle in the wilds. Asahel, then, pursued Abner, never swerving from his track to right or left. So Abner turned round and said, "Are you Asahel?" He answered, "I am." Abner then said, "Turn off to the right or left, and seize one of the fighting men, and take his arms." But Asahel would not give up the pursuit. Again Abner spoke to him, "Leave off following me; else I will strike you to the ground; and how could I then look your brother Joab in the face?" As he still refused to draw off, Abner dealt him "a backward stroke" through the abdomen, so that the spear came out behind; and Asahel fell and died on the spot. [And all who came up to the place where Asahel had fallen and died stood still.]

Joab and Abishai now took up the pursuit of Abner. But at sunset, as they reached the hill of Ammah, on the east<sup>4</sup> of the road in the wilderness of Geba<sup>4</sup>, the Benjamites closed in behind Abner, forming a solid body, and halted on the top of

<sup>1</sup>—<sup>1</sup> Inserted with Luc., etc.

<sup>2</sup>—<sup>2</sup> Added with LXX.

<sup>3</sup> An uncertain word. MT "of rocks" (or "flints").

<sup>4</sup> MT "Gibeon."



"the hill of Ammah." Thence Abner called to Joab, "Must the sword devour for ever? Do you not know that the after-taste will be bitter? Will you not at last call off the people from pursuing their brothers?" Joab answered, "As Yahweh<sup>2</sup> lives, but for this word of yours, morning should have dawned before the people had desisted from the pursuit of their brothers." So Joab then blew a trumpet, and his whole army halted, and did not pursue the Israelites further, or renew the fight. But Abner and his men marched through the Jordan-valley all that night, crossing the Jordan and traversing the whole length of "the Gorge," till they reached Mahanaim. And Joab, having abandoned the pursuit of Abner, gathered his forces together, when it was found that of David's soldiers nineteen men were missing, besides Asahel; while they had slain of the Benjamites and the people of Abner 360 men.  
 \* \* Then, taking up the body of Asahel (which they afterwards buried in his father's grave at Bethlehem), Joab and his men marched the whole night, and entered Hebron just as morning broke.

But the war between Saul's house and \* \* David lasted a long time; David growing constantly stronger, and Saul's house weaker.<sup>4</sup>

### (c) iii. 6-11. *The Quarrel between Abner and Eshbaal.*

Now during the war between the house of Saul and the house of David, Abner was constantly gaining influence in the house of Saul. But there was a former concubine of Saul's, named Rizpah, the daughter of Aiah; and with reference to her, Eshbaal<sup>3</sup> said to Abner, "What do you mean by cohabiting with my father's concubine?" Abner was greatly incensed by this question of Eshbaal's, and retorted, "Am I then a dog's head [of Judah]<sup>5</sup>?—I who this day am showing my good-will to the house of Saul, and to his relatives and friends, and have kept you from falling into the

<sup>2</sup>—<sup>1</sup> MT "a certain hill" (perhaps rightly).

<sup>2</sup> So LXX, etc. MT "God."

<sup>3</sup>—<sup>3</sup> "Eithron"—found only here.

<sup>4</sup>—<sup>4</sup> Vv. 2-5, on p. 87.

<sup>5</sup> LXX, etc.

<sup>6</sup> Not in LXX.

hand of David? You would rake up against me a scandal about a woman at this time of day! May God do his worst to Abner if I do not bring about for David 'this day' what Yahweh has sworn to him—to transfer the kingdom from the house of Saul, and establish the throne of David over Israel and Judah from Dan to Beersheba!" Eshbaal dared not say another word to Abner; so much did he fear him.

(d) iii. 12-21. *Negotiations between Abner and David.*

Abner sent messengers forthwith to David "at Hebron" to say, ["Whose is the land?" saying] "Make an agreement with me, and my influence is at your disposal to bring all Israel round to you." David answered, "Very good! I will make an agreement with you; only, one condition I impose on you: you shall not see my face unless 'you bring' Michal, Saul's daughter, with you when you come to see me." At the same time David sent messengers to Eshbaal, Saul's son, to say, "Give up my wife Michal, whom I betrothed at the price of a hundred Philistine foreskins." So Eshbaal sent and took her from "her" husband Paltiel, the son of Laish. Her husband accompanied her as far as Bahurim, weeping all the way; but there Abner ordered him back, and he returned.

Meanwhile Abner had conferred with the elders of Israel, and put the situation before them thus: "For a long time back you have been desirous of having David as king over you. Now then, carry it out; for Yahweh has given this promise to David, 'By my servant David 'I' will deliver my people Israel from the Philistines and from all their enemies.'" He also spoke in the same sense to the Benjamites. Finally, he set out for Hebron to acquaint David personally with the wish of the Israelites and of the whole house of Benjamin. So Abner came to David at Hebron, accompanied by twenty men; and David made a banquet for them. At the close Abner said to David, "I will now set about gathering all Israel to my lord the king. They will enter into a covenant with you; and you shall reign as widely as your heart could wish." David then dismissed Abner, and he departed in safety.

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1—1 LXX.

2—2 So Luc. MT "instead of him," or "where he was."

3—3 LXX.

Just then David's men under Joab came in from a foray, bringing much spoil with them. Abner was no longer with David in Hebron, but had been dismissed by David, and had gone away safely. So when Joab and the troop that was with him came in, Joab was told that Abner the son of Ner had been to the king, who had let him go unharmed. Joab went straight to the king and said, "What is this you have done? Abner has come to you, has he? Why have you let him get safely away? Do you not know Abner the son of Ner—that he only came to deceive you, to find out your going and coming, and spy out all you are doing?"

Joab then went out from David's presence, and sent messengers after Abner, and brought him back from the <sup>2</sup>cistern of Sirah<sup>2</sup>, without David's knowledge. So Abner came back to Hebron, and Joab led him apart to the side<sup>3</sup> of the gateway, as if to speak with him quietly; and there he stabbed him fatally in the abdomen, in revenge for the blood of his brother Asahel. When David heard of this afterwards he exclaimed, "I and my kingdom are for ever guiltless before Yahweh of the blood of Abner, the son of Ner. May it recoil on the head of Joab, and all his father's house! May there never fail from Joab's house one that suffers from flux or leprosy, or leans on a crutch<sup>4</sup>, or falls by the sword, or is in want of bread!" [Joab and Abishai had lain in wait for<sup>5</sup> Abner, because he had slain Asahel their brother, in the battle at Gibeon.]

David then commanded Joab and all the people about him to tear their clothes and put on sackcloth, and wail before Abner; while king David himself walked behind the bier. Thus they buried Abner in Hebron, the king weeping aloud over his grave; and all the people wept likewise. The king chanted the funeral dirge for Abner, as follows:

<sup>1-1</sup> So LXX.

<sup>2-2</sup> Or Bor-Sirah.

<sup>3</sup> LXX; MT "middle."

<sup>4-4</sup> LXX; MT "holds the distaff" (?).

<sup>5-5</sup> LXX; MT "killed."

Should Abner have died the death of a fool?

Thy hands were not bound, nor thy feet put in fetters!  
As one falls before knaves thou'rt fallen!

And again the whole assembly wept. And when all the people came to urge David to eat in the daytime, David swore, "May God punish me if before sundown I taste bread or food of any kind!" When all the people took note of this they were pleased; indeed, all that the king had done made a good impression on the people. For thus [all the people and] all Israel understood that day that it was not with the king's will that Abner, the son of Ner, had met his death. To his courtiers, moreover, the king said, "Know you that 'a great chieftain' in Israel has fallen to-day? And I, though an anointed king, am broken-hearted this day; but these men, the sons of Zeruiah, are too cruel for me. May Yahweh requite him who has committed the crime as his crime deserves!"

#### (f) iv. *The Assassination of Ishbaal.*

When "Ishbaal" the son of Saul heard of Abner's death in Hebron, he lost all courage, and all Israel was dismayed. Now "Ishbaal" had two men who were leaders of guerilla-bands; one named Baanah, and the other Rechab, both sons of Rimmon of Beeroth, of the Benjamites. (For Beeroth used to be reckoned as Benjamite; but the Beerothites fled to Gittaim, where they have dwelt as protected guests to this day. <sup>1</sup> <sup>2</sup>) These sons of Rimmon of Beeroth, then, Rechab and Baanah, came to Ishbaal's house at the hottest time of the day, when he was taking his noontide siesta. <sup>3</sup> And finding that the woman who kept the gate of the house (who had been sifting wheat) had fallen fast asleep over her task, <sup>3</sup> Rechab and Baanah his brother slipped past, and entered the house where Ishbaal lay asleep on his bed in the bedchamber. So they attacked and killed him, and cut off his head, and took it with them. Then, travelling all night by the way of the Jordan-valley, they brought Ishbaal's head to David at Hebron, and said to the king, "Here is the head of Ishbaal, Saul's son, your enemy who sought your

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<sup>1-2</sup> So LXX.

<sup>2-3</sup> V. 4 out of place here, probably belongs to ch. ix. See p. 95.

<sup>3-3</sup> So LXX; MT gives no sense.

life; Yahweh has wrought vengeance for my lord the king this day on Saul and his offspring." But David answered Rechab and his brother Baanah, the sons of Rimmon of Beeroth, "As Yahweh lives, who has saved my life from every danger, when a man announced to me that Saul was dead, thinking that he brought me welcome tidings, I seized and slew him in Ziklag, as my reward for his good news! How, then, should I act when ruthless men have murdered an honest man in his own house on his bed? Should I not require his blood at your hands, and destroy you from the earth?" David then gave the order to his men, who slew them, cut off their hands and feet, and hung them up by the pool in Hebron. But the head of Ishbaal they took and buried in Abner's grave in Hebron.

(3) *David anointed King of Israel* (v. 1-5).

Then all the tribes of Israel came to David at Hebron, and said, "Look! We are of your bone and flesh. Long ago, when Saul was our king, it was you who used to lead out Israel to battle and bring it home again. And Yahweh has given you this promise, 'It is you who shall shepherd my people Israel, and you who shall be prince over Israel.'" So all the elders of Israel came to the king at Hebron; and king David made a covenant with them before Yahweh. Then they anointed David king of Israel.

[David was thirty years old at his accession, and reigned forty years. In Hebron he reigned over Judah seven years and six months, and in Jerusalem he reigned thirty-three years over both Israel and Judah.]

*A list of David's sons born in Hebron* (iii. 2-5). The following sons were born to David in Hebron: his firstborn Amnon, to Ahinoam of Jezreel; his second Chileab, to Abigail the widow of Nabal the Carmelite; the third Absalom, son of Maachah, daughter of Talmai the king of Geshur; the fourth Adonijah, son of Haggith; the fifth Shephatiah, son of Abital; and the sixth Jithream, to Eglah, wife of \* \* \* (?). These were born to David in Hebron.

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\* MT inserts "David"; but it is probable that the name of a former husband of Eglah stood here originally.

## 2. DAVID AS KING OF ALL ISRAEL (v. 6-viii. 17).

### (1) *David captures Jerusalem and makes it his Residence* (v. 6-12).

The king then marched with his men to Jerusalem against the Jebusites, the native inhabitants of the land. Some one said to David, "You cannot get in there 'except you remove the blind and the lame' (?)"; meaning, "David cannot get in there!" Nevertheless David captured the fort of Zion [which became the city of David]. On that day David said, "Everyone who smites a Jebusite \* \* \* \* \* and the lame and the blind, who are heartily hated by David." Hence the maxim that no blind man or cripple may enter the house of Yahweh. David then took up his residence in the citadel, and named it the "City of David," building <sup>the city</sup> proper round it from the Millo inwards (?). David's power steadily increased, and Yahweh, God of Zebaoth, was with him. Hiram, the king of Tyre, sent ambassadors to David, and along with them cedar-wood, carpenters, and stone-masons<sup>4</sup>; and they built a palace for David. Thus David perceived that Yahweh had confirmed his kingship over Israel, and had exalted his realm for his people Israel's sake.

*David's sons born in Jerusalem* (v. 13-16). David took other concubines and wives in Jerusalem after he had come thither from Hebron, and had sons and daughters born to him. The names of the sons born to him in Jerusalem are these: Shammua, Shohab, Nathan, Solomon, Ibhar, Elihua, Nepheg, Japhia, Elihama, Eliada, and Eliphelet.

### (2) *Victories over the Philistines* (v. 17-25).

When the Philistines heard that David had been anointed king over <sup>all</sup> Israel, they came up in full force to seize David; and David, hearing of this, went down to the fastness. When the Philistines came, they spread themselves over the plain of

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<sup>1-2</sup> Or, "but the blind and the lame will remove you." Neither rendering gives an intelligible sense.

<sup>2-3</sup> The omitted words are utterly obscure, and the whole context presents insoluble difficulties.

<sup>3-4</sup> So LXX, and 1 Chr. xi. 8; MT "David."

<sup>4</sup> MT here inserts the word "wall" (not in LXX). See 1 Chr. xiv. 1.

Rephaim; and David inquired of Yahweh, "Shall I advance against the Philistines? Wilt thou deliver them into my hand?" Yahweh answered, "Yes! I will certainly deliver the Philistines into your hand." So David came to Baal-Perazim, and defeated them there. Then he exclaimed, "Yahweh has burst through my enemies before me, like the bursting of water through a dam"; hence the place is called Baal-Perazim (= "Lord of Burstings"). There, too, the Philistines left their idols,<sup>1</sup> which David and his men carried off.

Once again the Philistines came up, and spread themselves over the plain of Rephaim. But when David inquired of Yahweh as before, the answer was, "Do not attack them in front<sup>2</sup>, but make a circuit to their rear, and attack them opposite the balsam-trees. When you hear a sound of marching in the tops of the balsam-trees, then charge quickly; for Yahweh will have gone forth before you to make havoc in the camp of the Philistines." David acted in accordance with these instructions of Yahweh, and routed the Philistines from Gibeon<sup>3</sup> to near Gezer.

### (3) *The Removal of the Ark to Jerusalem* (vi.).

David [again] "assembled" all the fighting men of Israel, to the number of 30,000; and he and all his people set out "for" Basrah in Judah, in order to bring up thence the ark of God, which bears the name of Yahweh Zebaoth, who sits enthroned upon the cherubim. Setting the ark of God on a new cart, they bore it from the house of Abinadab on the hill. Uzza and Ahio, the sons of Abinadab, guided the cart, <sup>4</sup>Uzza walking<sup>4</sup> beside the ark, while Ahio went in front of it. David and all the house of Israel were dancing before Yahweh with all "their" might, and singing<sup>5</sup> to the accompaniment of guitars, harps, tambourines, bells (?) and cymbals. But when they reached

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<sup>1</sup> LXX and 1 Chr. xiv. 12, "gods."

<sup>2</sup>—<sup>2</sup> Inserting a word with LXX.

<sup>3</sup> So LXX and 1 Chr. xiv. 16; MT "Geba."

<sup>4</sup>—<sup>4</sup> These two words have been displaced in MT by a senseless repetition which is not in LXX.

<sup>5</sup>—<sup>5</sup> So 1 Chr. xiii. 8; MT "cypress-trees."

the threshing-floor of Nachon,<sup>1</sup> Uzza put out "his hand" and took hold of the ark of God, because the oxen were restive.<sup>2</sup> Then Yahweh's wrath was kindled against Uzza; and there God smote him "for laying his hand on the ark"; and he died on the spot beside the ark of God. David was "greatly troubled" because of Yahweh's outbreak on Uzza, and he called the place Perez-Uzza (= "Outbreak on Uzza")—the name it bears to this day. Such fear of Yahweh fell on David that day that he said, "How can the ark of Yahweh come to me?" So, being unwilling to remove the ark of Yahweh into the city of David, he left it in the house of Obed-Edom of Gath. Thus the ark of Yahweh remained for three months in the house of Obed-Edom of Gath, and Yahweh blessed Obed-Edom and all his family.

When king David heard that Yahweh had blessed the household and all the possessions of Obed-Edom for the sake of the ark of God, he went and brought up the ark from the house of Obed-Edom to David's city amid great rejoicings. When the bearers of the ark had advanced six paces, he sacrificed an ox and a fattened calf. David kept dancing before Yahweh round and round, with all his might, clad only in a linen ephod.<sup>3</sup> Thus David and all the house of Israel brought up the ark of Yahweh, with shouting and blowing of trumpets. And as the ark of Yahweh entered the city of David, Michal, Saul's daughter, looking from the window, saw king David leaping and dancing around before Yahweh, and secretly despised him. After they had brought in the ark of Yahweh, and set it in its place in the tent which David had prepared for it, David offered burnt-offerings and peace-offerings before Yahweh; and having finished offering them he blessed the people in the name of Yahweh Zebaoth. Afterwards he distributed to all the people—to the whole multitude of Israel, men and women—to each a cake of bread, a " " " (!), and a raisin-cake. Then all the people went to their homes.

<sup>1</sup> 1 Chr. xiii. 9 "Chidon."

<sup>2-2</sup> So Chron. and versions.

<sup>3</sup> Meaning uncertain.

<sup>4-4</sup> So 1 Chr. xiii. 10.

<sup>5</sup> See p. 13.



When David came home to greet his family, Michal, Saul's daughter, came out to meet him with this for welcome : " Much honour has the king of Israel gained to-day, exposing himself before the slave-girls of his subjects, as any vulgar fellow might expose himself ! " To this David answered, " I will dance<sup>1</sup> before Yahweh, who chose me in preference to your father, and all his house, by appointing me leader of Yahweh's people Israel. And I will play before Yahweh ; and although I demean myself still further, and become utterly contemptible in your<sup>2</sup> eyes, yet by the slave-girls of whom you speak I shall be held in honour." And Michal, Saul's daughter, had no child to the day of her death.

(4) *David's Wish to build a Temple* (vii.).

Now after the king had taken up his abode in his palace, <sup>3</sup>when Yahweh had given him rest from his enemies on every side,<sup>3</sup> he said one day to Nathan the prophet, " Here am I sitting in a cedar palace, while the ark of God remains under tent-curtains ! " Nathan answered, " Carry out what you have in your mind ; for Yahweh is with you."

But that night Yahweh's word came to Nathan as follows : " Go and say to my servant David, ' Thus speaks Yahweh : Is it for you to build a house for me to dwell in ? Nay ! I have not dwelt in any house from the time when I brought up the sons of Israel from Egypt to this day, but have moved about in tent and tabernacle. Have I ever, in all my wanderings among the Israelites, spoken to any of the Judges<sup>4</sup> of Israel whom I appointed to shepherd my people<sup>5</sup> ' , a word like this : ' Why have you not built me a house of cedar ? ' "

" Now, therefore, this is the word you must speak to my servant David : Thus says Yahweh Zebaoth : ' I took you from the pastures where you followed the flock to make you leader of my people Israel. I have been with you in

<sup>1-2</sup> Inserted from Luc.

<sup>3</sup> LXX ; MT " my own."

<sup>3-3</sup> These words are wanting in 1 Chr. xvii. 1.

<sup>4</sup> So 1 Chr. xvii. 6 ; MT " tribes."

<sup>5</sup> The remainder of the chapter bears marks of later style, and is probably an expansion of the older narrative.

all that you have undertaken, and have cut off all your enemies before you. I will make your name equal to that of the greatest potentates on earth; and will assign to my people Israel a dwelling-place, planting it so that it shall dwell there undisturbed, and no longer be oppressed by cruel men as it has been ever since I appointed Judges over my people Israel; and will give "it" rest from all "its" enemies." [And Yahweh "will make you great; for" he will build a house for you.] "When your days are numbered and you lie with your fathers, I will raise up your offspring, the issue of your body, after you, and establish their kingdom. [He shall build a house for my name, and I will confirm the throne of his kingdom for ever.]" I will be a father to them, and they shall be my sons, so that when they transgress I will chastise them with humane and lenient strokes; but "I will not withdraw" my mercy from them, as I did "from your predecessor" Saul. Your house and kingdom shall be steadfast before me<sup>4</sup> for ever; your throne shall be established for all time.'" In accordance with these words and this whole revelation, Nathan spoke to David.

Then king David went in and seated himself before Yahweh, and said: "Who am I, O Lord Yahweh, and what is my house, that thou hast brought me thus far? And as if this were too little for thee, Lord Yahweh, thou hast spoken even of thy servant's house in a distant future, and hast "let me see many generations of men", O Lord Yahweh! What more can David say to thee? Thou knowest thy servant, O Lord Yahweh! For thy servant's<sup>6</sup> sake hast thou acted according to thy mind, "in revealing to thy servant all this greatness." Therefore art thou

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1—1 A slight emendation; MT "will tell you that."

2 V. 13 is at least a parenthesis, and most likely a later insertion.

3—3 So 1 Chr. xvii. 13; MT "from Saul whom I removed from before you."

4 LXX, etc.; MT "you."

5—5 Emended partly after 1 Chr. xvii. 17; MT "this is the law for men" (?).

6 LXX and 1 Chr. xvii. 19; MT "word's."

great, O "Lord Yahweh", for there is none like thee, nor is there a God besides thee, from all that our ears have heard. And what other<sup>1</sup> nation is there on earth like thy people Israel, whom a God has gone forth to redeem as a people for himself, and to make himself a name, by performing for "them great" and terrible deeds, "driving out" before "his" people<sup>2</sup> "another nation with its gods"? And thou hast established Israel as thy people for ever; and thou, Yahweh, art become their God.

And now, "Lord Yahweh", the promise which thou hast made concerning thy servant and his house, do thou fulfil for all time, and do as thou hast spoken. Then shall thy name—Yahweh Zebaoth, God over Israel—be for ever glorious; and the house of thy servant David shall stand before thee. For thou, Yahweh Zebaoth, God of Israel, hast revealed to thy servant that thou wilt build him a house; wherefore thy servant has found courage to offer this prayer unto thee.

Now, therefore, O Lord Yahweh, thou art God, and thy words shall come true, and thou hast spoken concerning thy servant this good thing. Be pleased now to bless thy servant's house, that it may stand for ever before thee. For thou, Lord Yahweh, hast spoken; and through thy blessing shall the house of thy servant be blessed for ever."

(5) *Summary of David's Wars, and List of his Officials* (viii.).

After this David defeated and subjugated the Philistines, and wrested the supremacy<sup>3</sup> from their hands. He also defeated the Moabites; and making the prisoners lie down on the ground he measured them off with a line: two-thirds of them to be put to death, and one full third to be spared; and Moab became subject and tributary to David. Then he defeated Hadadezer, the son of Rehob, king of Zobah, when he went to "set up" his monument at the River Euphrates. David captured 1,700 horsemen

<sup>1</sup> LXX; MT "one."

<sup>2-3</sup> MT adds "which thou hast redeemed for thyself from Egypt."

<sup>3</sup> Lit. "the bridle of the mother-city."

<sup>4-5</sup> LXX, etc.

from him and 20,000 footmen: he hamstringed all the chariot horses, reserving only 100. And when the Arameans of Damascus came to the help of Hadadezer, king of Zobah, David killed 22,000 men of the Arameans. He then appointed lieutenant-governors in Aram of Damascus; and the Arameans became tributary subjects of David. Thus Yahweh gave victory to David wherever he went.

David took the golden shields which Hadadezer's men had worn, and brought them to Jerusalem. From 'Tebah<sup>1</sup> also and Berothai, cities of Hadadezer, king David obtained a great quantity of bronze. And when Tou, the king of Hamath, heard that David had routed the entire army of Hadadezer, he sent Hadoram<sup>2</sup> his son to king David to salute him, and congratulate him on his victorious battle with Hadadezer—for Hadadezer had been at war with Tou—sending with him articles of silver, gold and bronze. These also king David dedicated to Yahweh, along with the silver and the gold which he had dedicated, taken from all the nations he had conquered—from Edom<sup>3</sup>, Moab, the Ammonites, the Philistines, the Amalekites, and from the spoil of Hadadezer, the son of Rehob, king of Zobah.

Thus David made himself a famous name. <sup>4</sup>And<sup>4</sup> as he returned from the defeat of the Arameans, <sup>5</sup>he slew of the Edomites<sup>5</sup> in the Salt-valley 18,000 men. He set up lieutenant-governors in Edom, <sup>6</sup>and all Edom became subject to David. [Yahweh gave victory to David wherever he went.]

So David reigned over all Israel, dispensing right and justice to all his subjects. Joab, the son of Zeruiah, was at the head of the army; and Jehoshaphat, the son of Ahilud, was the chancellor. <sup>7</sup>Abiathar, the son of Ahimelech, the son of Ahitub, and Zadok<sup>7</sup> were priests; and Seraiah (?) was secretary of State. Benaiah, the son

<sup>1</sup> 1 Chr. xviii. 8; MT "Betah."

<sup>2</sup> 1 Chr. xviii. 10; MT "Joram."

<sup>3</sup> LXX, etc.; MT "Aram."

<sup>4-6</sup> A necessary addition.

<sup>7-8</sup> Rearranging clauses and emending after Syr.

of Jehoiada, was 'over' the Crethi and Plethi.<sup>2</sup> David's sons were priests.

### 3. A HISTORY OF DAVID'S COURT (IX.-XX.).

*These chapters form a continuous narrative (continued in 1 Kings i., ii.) of the highest value both from a historical and a literary point of view. The writer's knowledge of David's affairs is based on first-hand information, and his graphic pen enables us to follow the course of events with engrossing interest.*

#### (1) David and Meribaal (ix.).

"Is there no one left of Saul's house," said David one day, "to whom I might show kindness for Jonathan's sake?" Now there was a servant of Saul's house named Ziba; and him they summoned before David. The king asked him, "Are you Ziba?" and he answered, "Your servant!" Then the king said, "Is there any man of Saul's house still living, to whom I may show kindness in God's name?" Ziba replied, "There is still a son of Jonathan left, who is lame in both legs." <sup>3</sup>This son had been a child of five when the news of the death of Saul and Jonathan came from Jezreel; his nurse had taken him up as she fled; but in the hurry of her flight she let him fall, and he was lamed. His name was Meribaal.<sup>4,5</sup> So the king asked Ziba where he was, and Ziba said, "Why, he is in the house of Machir, the son of Ammiel, in Lo-debar." King David sent accordingly and fetched him from the house of Machir, the son of Ammiel, in Lo-debar.

When Meribaal, the son of Jonathan, and grandson of Saul, came to David, he fell on his face and did homage to him. David said, "Meribaal!" He answered, "Your servant is before you." David said to him, "Do not be afraid! I am to treat you kindly for the sake of Jonathan your father, and give you back all the estates of your grandfather Saul; while you yourself shall eat daily at my table." Meribaal bowed and said,

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<sup>1-2</sup> So Versions and 1 Chr. xviii. 17.

<sup>3</sup> Foreign mercenaries in David's service.

<sup>3-5</sup> From iv. 46.

<sup>4</sup> MT "Mephibosheth"; and so throughout. See the note on Eshbaal, p. 81. The original name in 1 Chr. viii. 34; ix. 40.

"What is your servant, that you should take notice of a dead dog such as I am?"

The king then called Ziba, Saul's steward, and said to him, "All that belonged to Saul and his whole family, I have given to your master's son. You shall cultivate the fields for him, along with your sons and slaves, and bring in the produce, so that your master's family may have enough to eat. But Meribaal, your master's son, shall eat regularly at my table."—Ziba, by the way, had fifteen sons and twenty slaves.—Said Ziba to the king, "Your servant will punctually carry out your Majesty's order."

So Meribaal ate at 'the royal table' as if he had been one of the king's sons. He had a young son named Micah, and all the inmates of Ziba's house were his slaves. [Thus Meribaal lived in Jerusalem, eating regularly at the king's table; he being lame in both his legs.]

(2) *War against the Ammonites and Arameans (x. i-xi. 1).*

Shortly after this the king of the Ammonites died, and was succeeded by his son Hanun; and David thought, "I will make friendly advances to Hanun, the son of Nahaah, in return for the friendship which his father showed to me." So David sent ambassadors to condole with Hanun on the loss of his father. But when David's envoys came to the Ammonites' country the Ammonite nobles said to Hanun their sovereign, "Do you suppose that it is out of respect for your father that David has sent messengers to condole with you? No! It is to inspect the city and spy it out with a view to its overthrow that he has sent his servants to you." Hanun then seized David's servants, had half of their beards shaved off and the lower half of their clothes cut away, and dismissed them. When David was told of this outrage he sent to meet them—for the men were overwhelmed with shame—with instructions to stay at Jericho till their beards were grown, and then come home.

Meanwhile the Ammonites, knowing that they had incurred David's deepest antipathy, sent and hired the Arameans of Beth-Rehob, and of Zobah, 20,000 foot soldiers; also the king of Maachah with a thousand men, and from Tob 12,000 men. As soon as David heard this he sent Joab with the whole army "and"

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— So Luc.; MT "my table."

the Guards<sup>2</sup> against them. Then the Ammonites marched out and drew up in battle order before the gate, while the Arameans of Zobah and Rehob, the men of Tob and Maschah, formed a separate army in the open field. Joab accordingly, seeing that he was to be attacked both in front and from the rear, selected the best of the fighting men of Israel, and drew up against the Arameans. The rest of the people he placed under the command of his brother Abishai, and posted them against the Ammonites, saying, "If the Arameans are too strong for me, you must lend me support; but if the Ammonites are too strong for you, then I will come to your help. Be of good courage, and let us fight manfully for our people, and for the cities of our God! Then let Yahweh take the issue into his own hands!" Joab then advanced with his troops to join battle with the Arameans, and put them to flight. And when the Ammonites saw that the Arameans were fleeing, they also took to flight before Abishai and re-entered the city. Joab, however, abandoned the attack on the Ammonites and returned to Jerusalem.

When the Arameans saw that they were beaten by the Israelites, they rallied their forces; and Hadadezer sent and brought out the Arameans beyond the River (Euphrates). They came to Helam, led by Shobach, Hadadezer's commander in chief. This was reported to David, who mustered all Israel, crossed the Jordan, and arrived at Helam. The Arameans drew up against David, and joined battle with him, but were put to flight before the Israelites; and David slew 700 chariot-horses and 40,000 <sup>2</sup>men<sup>3</sup> of the Arameans, wounding Shobach their commander, so that he died there. And when all the kings who were vassals of Hadadezer saw that they were worsted by the Israelites, they made peace with Israel, and became subject to it, and the Arameans did not dare to give further assistance to the Ammonites.

In the following year, at the season when <sup>2</sup>kings<sup>3</sup> usually take the field,<sup>3</sup> David sent out Joab with his soldiers and all Israel,

<sup>2</sup> The Heb. word means "Heroes," but is used technically of the *corps d'élite* which formed the standing nucleus of David's army.

<sup>3</sup> MT "horsemen"; but 1 Chr. xix. 18 reads "footmen."

<sup>3</sup> In the spring.

who laid waste the country of the Ammonites and laid siege to Rabbah ; while David remained in Jerusalem.

(3) *David and Bathsheba* (xi. 2-27a).

It happened one evening that David, having risen from his siesta, was walking on the roof of his palace, whence he caught sight of a woman washing herself. The woman was very beautiful ; and David learned on inquiry that she was Bathsheba, the daughter of Eliam, married to Uriah the Hittite. David then sent messengers to fetch her ; and when she came to him, he slept with her ; she having just purified herself after her uncleanness. Then she returned to her own house.

When the woman became pregnant she sent to inform David of her condition. David forthwith despatched an order to Joab to send him Uriah the Hittite ; and Joab did so. So Uriah came, and David asked him how things went with Joab, and the army, and the campaign. Then he said to Uriah, "Go down to your house and wash your feet." But Uriah, though he left the palace, followed by a present from the king, slept at the palace door with his master's servants, and did not go down to his house. When they told David that Uriah had not gone down to his house, he said to him, "You were just off a journey ; why did you not go to your house ?" Uriah answered, "Israel and Judah, with the ark, are living in tents ; my lord Joab and your majesty's servants are camping on the bare ground ; how could I enter my house to eat and drink and lie with my wife ? As "Yahweh" lives, and as you live, that is a thing I cannot do !" So David said, "Stay here to-day, then ; and to-morrow I will let you go," and Uriah stayed in Jerusalem that day. But the next morning David invited him to eat and drink in his presence, and made him drunk. And in the evening he went out and lay on his couch with his master's servants ; but down to his house he did not go.

In the morning David wrote a letter to Joab, and sent it by Uriah. This is what he wrote in the letter : "Set Uriah in the front line where the fighting is fiercest ; then fall back from him, so that he may be hit and killed." So Joab, examining the city, assigned to Uriah a position where he knew that brave men were stationed ; and when the men of the city made a



ally and fought with Joab, several of the people, David's soldiers, fell; and among the killed was Uriah the Hittite. Joab then sent to David a full report of the battle; and added the following instruction to the messenger: "When you have finished giving your account of the battle, if the king should get angry and say, 'Why did you press the fighting so near the city? Did you not know that they would shoot from the wall? Who killed Abimelech, the son of Jerubbaal?' Was it not a woman who threw a millstone on him from the wall, so that he died in Thebez? Why did you venture so close to the wall?'—in that case you will answer, 'Your servant Uriah the Hittite is dead also.'"

So the messenger departed, and came and told David all that Joab had charged him to say, <sup>2</sup>relating the whole course of the battle. David was angry with Joab, and spoke to the messenger<sup>2</sup> exactly as Joab had anticipated. The messenger answered; "The enemy's men were too strong for us, and came out to meet us in the open, <sup>3</sup>and we were driven back<sup>3</sup> to the opening of the gate. There the archers shot at your servants from the wall and several of your Majesty's servants—<sup>4</sup>about eighteen men<sup>4</sup>—were killed; and among the dead is your servant Uriah the Hittite," David then said to the messenger, "Take this message to Joab: 'Do not let this affair trouble you; for the sword cuts this way or that indiscriminately. Press vigorously your assault on the city and destroy it.' Say this to encourage him."

When Uriah's wife heard that her husband was dead, she chanted the funeral wail for him. —But as soon as the funeral rites were over, David sent and took her into his house; and she became his wife, and bore him a son.

#### (4) *David and Nathan* (xi. 27b-xii. 14).

But the thing that David had done displeased Yahweh; and he sent to David Nathan <sup>5</sup>the prophet<sup>5</sup>. He went in to him and said:

<sup>2</sup> MT "Jerubbesheth"; see the note on Eshbaal, p. 81.

<sup>2-3</sup> These words are supplied from the LXX, which then repeats the exact questions that Joab had prepared the messenger for.

<sup>3-3</sup> Lit. "we were against (or upon) them" The expression is obscure.

<sup>4-4</sup> Luc., etc.

<sup>5-5</sup> So LXX, etc.

"Two men lived in the same city, one rich and the other poor. The rich man had flocks and herds in abundance; but the poor man had nothing at all except one little ewe-lamb, which he had bought and nourished. It grew up with him and his children; it shared bite and sup with him, and slept in his bosom; it was like a daughter to him. Well, there came one on a visit to the rich man; and because he grudged taking one of his own sheep or oxen to kill for the traveller who had come to him, he took the poor man's lamb, and prepared it for his guest."

David's anger was roused against the man; and he said to Nathan, "As Yahweh lives, the man who has done this deserves to die! He must make 'seven-fold' reparation for the lamb, because he has done this thing, and showed no pity."

Nathan answered, "You are that man! Thus speaks Yahweh, the God of Israel! 'I have anointed you king over Israel, and delivered you out of the hand of Saul; I have given you the daughter<sup>2</sup> of your master, and handed over his wives to your embraces, and put the daughters<sup>3</sup> of Israel and Judah at your disposal. And if all this were not enough, I would confer on you additional favours of the same kind.' Why then, have you slighted \* \* \* Yahweh by doing what is abhorrent to him? Uriah the Hittite you have slain by the sword, and his wife you have taken as your own, [and him you have murdered by the sword of the Ammonites]. And now the sword shall never cease from your house; because you have slighted me and taken the wife of Uriah the Hittite in marriage. This is Yahweh's sentence: 'I will raise up trouble for you from your own family, and take away your wives before your eyes and give them to another, who will lie with them in the sight of yonder sun. For whereas you have gone to work in secret, I will carry out this threat before all Israel, and before the sun.'"

David then said to Nathan, "I have sinned against Yahweh." Nathan answered, "Yahweh also on his part has forgiven your sin: you shall not die. Nevertheless, seeing you have in this

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<sup>1</sup>—<sup>1</sup> So LXX; MT "fourfold."

<sup>2</sup> MT "house."

<sup>3</sup> So Syr.; MT "house."

matter set : 'Yahweh at naught, the child that has been born to you shall die."

(5) *The Death of the Child* (xii. 15-25).

Nathan then went to his house ; and Yahweh struck down the child whom Uriah's wife had borne to David with sickness. Thereupon David sought God in the sanctuary on behalf of the young child, fasting continuously, and going in and spending the nights <sup>2</sup>in sackcloth<sup>2</sup> on the ground. And when the oldest of his servants stood over him, and tried to make him rise from the ground, he refused, and would not break bread with them. On the seventh day the child died. The courtiers were afraid to tell David that he was dead, for they said to one another, "You saw how even while the child was alive he would not listen to us when we spoke to him : we cannot mention the death of the child, or he may do himself an injury." But David noticed the courtiers whispering together, and, surmising that the child was dead, he asked them if it were so : and they answered "Yes !" David then rose from the ground, washed and anointed himself and changed his clothes, and went into the house of Yahweh and prayed. Afterwards he entered the palace and called for food, which was set before him, and he partook of it. His courtiers, remarking on the strangeness of his conduct, said, "°While° the child was °still° alive you fasted and wept ; but no sooner is he dead than you rise and take food !" He answered, "As long as the child was alive, I fasted and wept, because I thought, 'Who knows but Yahweh will take pity on me, and spare the child's life ?' But now that he is dead why should I fast ? Should I be able to bring him back again ? No ! I shall go to him, but he will never return to me."

After this David consoled his wife Bathsheba, and renewed conjugal intercourse with her. She bore a son whom he named Solomon. And Yahweh loved him, and through Nathan the prophet conferred on him the name Jedidiah<sup>3</sup> in token of Yahweh's °delight in him."

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<sup>1-1</sup> MT — "the enemies of," taking the verb in a doubtful sense.

<sup>2-2</sup> MT "and lay." The text varies in LXX.

[<sup>3</sup> The name Jedidiah means "Yahweh's delight."—Ed.]

(6) *The Capture of Rabbah* (xii. 26-31).

Meanwhile Joab made an assault on Rabbah, the capital of the Ammonites, and having taken the water-city, he sent messengers to David to say, "I have assaulted Rabbah, and taken the water-city by storm. Now, then, gather the rest of the people, and invest the city and capture it; so that I may not take it and have my name associated with its conquest." So David assembled the whole of the people, marched to Rabbah, and took it by assault. They took the crown from the head of Milcom<sup>1</sup>—it weighed 120 lbs. in gold, and contained<sup>2</sup> a very costly gem—and David put it on his head; and he carried off much spoil from the city. "Its population he brought out and set "to forced labour" with saws and iron axes and picks; and made them work with brick-moulds.<sup>3</sup> Having done the same to all the Ammonite cities, David returned with all his army to Jerusalem.

(7) *Amnon and Tamar* (xiii. 1-22).

It was after this that David's son Amnon fell in love with a beautiful sister of Absalom, the son of David, whose name was Tamar. So distracted was Amnon for his half-sister Tamar that he made himself ill; for she was a virgin, and it seemed to Amnon very difficult to do anything to her. Now Amnon had a friend named Jonadab, a son of Shimeah, David's brother. This Jonadab, who was a very shrewd man, asked him, "How is it, my dear prince, that I find you looking so poorly morning after morning? Will you not tell me?" Amnon answered, "I am in love with Tamar, the sister of my brother Absalom." Jonadab then advised him to take to his bed and pretend to be sick, and when his father came to see him to say, "Let my sister Tamar come and give me something to eat. If she would prepare food in my presence, so that I could look on, I would eat from her hand." Amnon accordingly kept his bed, feigning sickness; and the king visited him, when

<sup>1</sup> MT "royal"; but see next verse.

<sup>2</sup> So LXX; MT "their king."

<sup>3</sup> So Versions, and 1 Chr. xx. 2.

<sup>4-4</sup> The meaning is obscure. Some think that different kinds of torture are described.

Amnon said to him, "Let Thamar my sister come and make a couple of pancakes in my presence, so that I may eat from her hand." So David sent for Thamar to the palace, and said, "Go to the house of your brother Amnon, and prepare something for him to eat;" and Thamar went to her brother Amnon's house, where he was lying in bed. She took some dough, kneaded it, and shaped it into pancakes in his presence, and baked the cakes. Then she called the attendant, who poured them out before him. But Amnon refused to eat, and said, "Put every man out from me!" When everyone had gone out, Amnon said to Thamar, "Bring the food into the bedchamber, and I will eat it from your hand." So Thamar took the cakes which she had made, and brought them to Amnon her brother in the bedchamber.

But when she handed it to him to eat he seized hold of her and said, "Come and lie with me, my sister." She answered, "Oh no, my brother! you must not dishonour me; for such things are not done in Israel. Do not commit this outrage. Where should I go to hide my shame? And *you* would be regarded as one of the most infamous scoundrels in Israel. Speak to the king, rather; he will not refuse to let you have me." But he would not listen to her, but forced and ravished her. Then he conceived an extreme aversion for her—an aversion stronger than the love he had formerly had for her—and he ordered her to rise and be gone. She answered, "No! No! my brother! For this would be even a greater wrong than the other<sup>a</sup> which you have already done me, if you send me away now." But he paid no heed to her, and called the servant who waited on him, and said, "Put this woman away from me out on the street, and bolt the door behind her."

[She was wearing a long-sleeved garment, such as "from of old" royal princesses wear while unmarried.] When the servant had turned her out on the street and bolted the door behind her, Thamar strewed ashes on her head, and tore the sleeved garment that she was wearing; and went away "screaming" with her hand upon her head. Her brother Absalom said to

<sup>a</sup>—<sup>1</sup> A conjectural reading: MT "took the pan (?) and . . ."

<sup>a</sup>—<sup>2</sup> So Luc., etc.; MT is untranslatable.

<sup>3</sup> An explanatory gloss on the following verse.

her, "Has Amnon your brother been with you? Well, now, my sister, just keep silent—after all he is your brother—and do not take this matter to heart." So Thamar lived in seclusion in the house of her brother Absalom.

When king David heard of all these things he was very angry; but he would not do anything to hurt the feelings of Amnon his son, for he was fond of him, because he was his first-born.<sup>1</sup> As for Absalom, he spoke never a word to Amnon good or bad; he so hated Amnon for having violated his sister Thamar.

(8) *Absalom's Revenge* (xiii. 23-38).

Two years passed, and Absalom had a sheep-shearing at Baal-Hazor, near Ephron,<sup>2</sup> to which he invited all the king's sons. First he went in to the king and said, "You know that your servant has a sheep-shearing soon; may he be honoured by the company of the king and his courtiers?" The king replied, "No, my son, we will not all go; for that would cause you inconvenience." Though Absalom "pressed him", he refused to go, but gave him his blessing. Then Absalom said, "If that may not be, at least let Amnon my brother go with us." The king answered, "Why should he go with you?" But when Absalom urged him, the king let Amnon go, with all the other princes.

<sup>3</sup>So Absalom prepared a banquet fit for a king<sup>1</sup>; but gave orders to his servants in these words: "Listen! When Amnon is in high spirits over his wine, and when I say to you, 'Down-with Amnon!' then kill him without fear; for I have given the order. Be bold, and show yourselves men of mettle!" So Absalom's servants did to Amnon as their master had bidden them. Then all the other princes rose up, mounted their mules, and fled.

While they were on their way home, a rumour reached David that Absalom had murdered all the king's sons, and not one of them survived. The king rose up and tore his clothes, and lay down on the ground; while all his courtiers<sup>2</sup> who stood round him tore their clothes likewise.<sup>3</sup> But Jonadab the son of Shimeah,

<sup>1</sup>—<sup>1</sup> Supplied from LXX and Versions.

<sup>2</sup> MT "Ephraim"; but texts of LXX differ.

<sup>3</sup>—<sup>3</sup> So LXX, etc.

David's brother, put in his word and said, "Your Majesty should not believe that all the young princes are slain. It is only Amnon who is dead; for there has been something grim about Absalom's mouth ever since he violated his sister Tamar. So your Majesty need not take it into his head that all the princes are dead; Amnon alone is dead." [And Absalom fled.]

Meanwhile the youth who was on the look-out descried a large body of men "coming down the slope on the Horonaim road; and came in and told the king, "I have seen men from the road to Horonaim coming down" by the side of the hill." Jonadab said to the king, "You see? The princes are coming! As your servant said, so it turns out!" The words were hardly out of his mouth when the king's sons came in, and wept aloud; the king also and all his courtiers broke into vehement weeping; <sup>3</sup> and the king mourned for his son the whole time.<sup>3</sup>

But Absalom had fled and gone to Thalmai, the son of Ammihud, the king of Geshur, where he remained for three years. [But Absalom had fled and gone to Geshur.]

(9) *Absalom restored to the King's Favour* (xiii. 39-xiv. 33).

But "the king's spirit" longed to go forth to Absalom; for he was reconciled to the fact that Amnon was dead. Now when Joab the son of Zeruiah perceived that the king's mind was set on Absalom, he sent to Tekoa, and brought thence a wise woman, and said to her, "Get yourself up as a mourner and put on mourning weeds; do not anoint yourself with oil; and look like a woman who has long mourned for a dead relative. Then go in to the king, and speak to him as I now tell you;" and Joab primed her with the words he wished her to say.

So the woman from Tekoa went in to the king, and falling on her face to the ground in reverence, cried out, "Help me, O king! "Help me!" Said the king, "What is the matter with you?" She answered, "Truly, I am a widow; my

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<sup>1</sup> Transcriptional error.

<sup>2-3</sup> Inserted from <sup>2</sup>Luc.

<sup>3-5</sup> Transposing the clause.

<sup>4-4</sup> So LXX (partly).

<sup>5-5</sup> LXX.

husband is long dead. And your handmaid had two sons, and they quarrelled in the field where there was no one to separate them, and one of them struck the other and killed him. And now the whole clan is up against your handmaid, demanding that I should give up the murderer of his brother, that they may put him to death for the life of his slain brother, and cut off the heir also. Thus they would extinguish the one spark that remains to me, leaving to my husband neither name nor remnant above the ground." The king said to the woman, "Go home! I will give the necessary orders on your behalf." The Tekoan woman answered, "On me and my family may the guilt lie, O King, and the king and his throne be guiltless!" "Whoever<sup>1</sup> says a word to you," replied the king, "bring him to me, and he shall give you no further trouble." The woman said, "Would the king please to mention the name of Yahweh his God, and swear that the blood-avenger shall not cause further mischief, and that my son shall not be cut off?" "By the life of Yahweh," the king swore, "not a hair of his head shall fall to the ground!"

Then the woman said, "Might your handmaid speak a word to your Majesty?" The king answered, "Certainly!" She said, "Why should you cherish a purpose so injurious to the people of God—for the king by what he has just said has adjudged himself guilty—as to refuse to recall your banished son? We must all die, to be sure, and be like water spilt on the ground which cannot be gathered up; but God does not cut short the life of him who devises means whereby one that is banished shall not remain banished from him. Now then, I came to tell my story to the king, because people frightened me, and I said to myself, 'I will speak to the king; perhaps the king will take up the cause of his maid-servant. Yes, the king will surely hear and deliver his maid-servant from the hand of the man <sup>a</sup>who is seeking<sup>2</sup> to cut off me and my son together from the people of 'Yahweh'.' Your handmaid thought, 'Let the word of my lord the king give me security; for as the Angel of God is my lord the king, in his discernment of right and wrong.' May Yahweh your God be with you!"

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<sup>1</sup> LXX.

<sup>2</sup> So LXX., etc.



Then the king said in answer to the woman, "Hide nothing from me! I am going to ask you a question." She said, "Speak on, your Majesty!" He then asked, "Has Joab had a hand with you in all this?" And the woman confessed: "As sure as you live, my lord, it is impossible to give an evasive answer to your Majesty's question. Yes! It was your servant Joab who put me up to this, and himself put all these words in your handmaid's mouth. To present the matter in a new light your servant Joab has done this. But my lord has the wisdom of the Angel of God, and knows everything that happens on earth."

The result was that the king said to Joab, "See! I will do as you wish. Go, then, and bring back the young man Absalom." Joab bowed his face to the ground, and thanked the king, and said, "To-day I know that I stand high in your Majesty's favour; since the king has granted his servant's request." Joab set out for Geshur accordingly, and brought Absalom to Jerusalem. But the king said, "Let him retire to his own house; he shall not see my face." So Absalom retired to his house, and did not see the king's face.

Now in all Israel there was no man so admired for his beauty as Absalom; from head to foot there was no blemish in him. And when he cut his hair—it was once a year that he cut it, when it became too heavy for him—it used to weigh over 'three and a half pounds' by the royal standard. He had three sons born to him, and one daughter whose name was Tamar<sup>1</sup>—a very beautiful woman.

Thus Absalom lived two years in Jerusalem without seeing the king's face. At last he sent for Joab, meaning to send him to the king; but Joab would not come. A second time he sent for him; and still Joab refused to come. Then Absalom said to his servants, "You know that field of Joab's next to mine, where he has a crop of barley? Go and set it on fire." The servants went accordingly and set fire to the field. Joab now bestirred himself, came to Absalom in his house, and asked him, "What does this mean? Your servants have set fire to my field." "Well," said Absalom, "I sent for you to

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<sup>1</sup>—Or, according to Luc., etc., "a pound and three-quarters."

<sup>2</sup> But Luc., etc., read "Maachah" (see 1 Kings xv. 2).

come here that you might take this message from me to the king: 'To what purpose have I come home from Geshur? I might as well be there still! But now I must see the king's face, if any guilt lies on me, put me to death.' " Joab then went and told this to the king, who thereupon called Absalom into his presence. When Absalom came, he bowed with his face to the ground before the king; and the king kissed Absalom.

(10) *Absalom raises the Standard of Revolt* (xv. 1-12).

Soon after this Absalom set up a state-coach with horses, and fifty men running before him. Every morning now found Absalom standing betimes by the road leading to the gate, where he would hail every man who came to submit a dispute to the king's award, and say, "From what city do you come?" The man would answer, "From such and such a tribe in Israel"; and Absalom would say (after hearing his statement), "Look you! Your plea is absolutely good and sound; but—you will find no representative of the king to hear you." Or again, Absalom would say, "If only I were appointed judge in the land, and every one who had a dispute or lawsuit could come to me! I would see him righted." And when any one approached to pay his respects, Absalom would hold out his hand, and embrace and kiss him. In this way Absalom used to behave to all the Israelites who came to the king for justice; and thus he stole the affections of the men of Israel.

After four<sup>1</sup> years Absalom said to the king, "I must go and discharge a vow which I have made to Yahweh in Hebron. For your servant, during his residence in Geshur in Aram, made a vow that if Yahweh would bring me back to Jerusalem I would worship Yahweh <sup>2</sup>in Hebron." The king answered, "Go, by all means!" So he took his departure and went to Hebron. At the same time Absalom sent secret emissaries through all the tribes of Israel with the intimation: "When you hear a trumpet blow, then shout, 'Absalom reigns in Hebron!'" There went with Absalom from Jerusalem 200 men who were invited to the sacrificial feast, and went in all good faith, knowing nothing. Moreover Absalom sent <sup>2</sup>an invitation<sup>2</sup> to Ahithophel the Gilonite, David's counsellor, to come

<sup>1</sup> So Luc., etc.; MT "forty."

<sup>2-2</sup> So Luc.

from his city of Giloh, and be present when he offered the sacrifices. Thus the conspiracy gained strength, and more and more people attached themselves to Absalom.

(11) *David leaves Jerusalem—Incidents of the Flight* (xv. 13-xvi. 14).

When the news was brought to David that the heart of the Israelites had been won over to Absalom, he issued orders for immediate flight to all the courtiers who were with him in Jerusalem: "We must be up and flee; there is no other way of escape from Absalom. Make all haste to depart, lest he come upon us suddenly and bring utter disaster on us, and put the city to the sword!" The courtiers answered, "It shall be as your Majesty chooses: we are your servants." So the king went out attended by all his household, except ten concubines whom the king left behind to look after the palace.

So the king went out and all <sup>1</sup>his servants<sup>2</sup> followed him. At the last house in the city he halted with his courtiers standing<sup>3</sup> beside him, while the Crethi and Plethi<sup>4</sup> and the <sup>5</sup>men of Issai of Gath<sup>4</sup>—600 men who had come with him from Gath—marched past before the king. The king called to Issai of Gath, "Why should you go with us too? Go back, and stay with the new king; for you are a foreigner and an exile from your native land. It was but yesterday that you came; and should I to-day make you a wanderer with us, when I am going I know not where? Go back, and take your fellow-countrymen with you; <sup>5</sup>and may Yahweh be<sup>5</sup> gracious and true <sup>5</sup>to you<sup>5</sup>!" But Issai replied to the king, "As Yahweh lives, and your Majesty lives, I will not! Where my lord the king is, be it for life or for death, there will your servant be!" David said, "Very good, then! Pass on!" So Issai of Gath marched past with all his men and his camp-followers; while the whole region resounded with loud weeping as all the people went past.

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<sup>1</sup>—<sup>1</sup> LXX, etc.; MT "the people."

<sup>2</sup> MT "passing."

<sup>3</sup> See p. 95.

<sup>4</sup>—<sup>4</sup> MT "Gittites."

<sup>5</sup>—<sup>5</sup> Inserted from LXX.

In the Kidron valley the king again stopped<sup>1</sup>, while all the people passed <sup>2</sup>by him, making for the olive-tree on the verge of the wilderness.<sup>3</sup> There too were Zadok <sup>3</sup>and Abiathar <sup>3</sup> who bore the ark of <sup>4</sup> God, which they had <sup>3</sup>set down<sup>3</sup> till the people from the city were all gone past. But the king said to Zadok, "Take the ark of God back to the city! If Yahweh is gracious to me he will bring me back and let me look on it and its abode. But if his mind is such that he has no good-will towards me—so be it! Let him do to me as he sees right." The king said further to Zadok the priest, "Look! You and Abiathar will return quietly to the city with your son Ahimaaz and Jonathan the son of Abiathar—both your sons are with you. Now mark! I will tarry by the fords of the wilderness until I receive a message from you to give me information." So Zadok and Abiathar brought the ark of God back to Jerusalem, and remained there.

David then went up the ascent of the mount of Olives, weeping as he went, with his head muffled and walking barefoot; and all the people that were with him had covered their heads, and wept continually as they made the ascent. Now David <sup>5</sup>had been told<sup>5</sup> that Abithophel was among the conspirators with Absalom, and he had said, "Turn the counsel of Abithophel to foolishness, O Yahweh!" And just as David reached the top of the hill, where it is the custom to worship God, lo! Hushai the Archite, <sup>6</sup>David's friend,<sup>6</sup> met him with coat torn and earth on his head. So David said to him, "If you come along with me you will only be an encumbrance to me. On the other hand, if you go back to the city, and speak to Absalom somewhat in this fashion: 'I would be your servant, O king! I was your father's servant formerly, but now I am yours'—then you may be able to frustrate the counsel of Abithophel in my interest. You will find there Zadok and Abiathar the priests; everything you hear from the palace you will make

<sup>1</sup> MT "crossed."

<sup>2-3</sup> So Luc.; MT contains untranslatable expressions.

<sup>3-3</sup> MT "and the Levites."

<sup>4-4</sup> MT inserts "the covenant of."

<sup>5-5</sup> MT "poured out"!

<sup>6-6</sup> LXX.

known to them. And look! Their two sons are with them there, Zadok's son Ahimaaz and Abiathar's son Jonathan; through them you can send me word of all you hear." So Hushai, David's friend, came to the city just as Absalom entered Jerusalem.

When David had passed the summit a little way, Ziba, Meribaal's servant, met him with a pair of asses saddled and loaded with 200 loaves of bread, 100 raisin-cakes, 100 summer-fruits, and a skin of wine. To the king's question, "What are these for?" Ziba answered, "The asses are for the king's family to ride upon; the bread and the fruit are for the young men to eat; and the wine is for any to drink who may faint in the wilderness." The king then asked, "But where is your master's son?" "Oh!" said Ziba, "he remains in Jerusalem, for he thinks the time has come when the house of Israel will restore to him the kingdom of his grandfather." "I see!" said the king. "Then all that belonged to Meribaal is yours," to which Ziba replied, "I fall on my knees! May you always be gracious to me, your Majesty!"

As king David reached Bahurim, a man was seen coming out of that village, who was of the same clan as Saul's family, by name Shimei, a son of Gera. He came out cursing all the time, and throwing stones at David and all the courtiers; although all the people and the whole Guard<sup>2</sup> were marching to right and left of him. Shimei's cursing ran thus, "Out with you! Out with you! You man of blood! You son of perdition! Yahweh has brought on you all the blood of the house of Saul, in whose stead you reigned, and has given the kingship into the hand of your son Absalom; and here you are in your adversity, because you are a man of blood!" Then Abishai the son of Zeruiah said to the king, "Why should your Majesty be cursed by this dead cur? Let me go across and cut off his head." But the king answered, "Oh, you sons of Zeruiah! What can I make of you? If he curses, and if Yahweh has said to him, 'Curse David,' who can find fault with him for doing so?" And speaking to the whole court, as well as to Abishai, David said, "You see that my own son, the fruit of my body, is seeking my life; what wonder if this

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<sup>2</sup> See p. 97, n. 1.

Benjaminite does the same? Leave him alone, and let him curse; for Yahweh has bidden him. It may be that Yahweh will look on my "affliction", and requite me with good for the curse which falls on me this day." So David and his men went along the road, while Shimei walked alongside of him on the hillside, cursing as he went, and flinging stones and dirt.

At last the king and all his followers arrived, faint and weary, "at the fords of the wilderness", where he refreshed himself.

(12) *Absalom in Jerusalem* (xvi. 15-xvii. 23).

By this time Absalom and "all the men of Israel had come to Jerusalem, Ahithophel also being with him. And when Hushai the Archite, David's friend, came to Absalom he cried to him, "Long live the king! Long live the king!" Absalom said to Hushai, "Is this your loyalty to your friend? Why have you not gone with your friend?" Hushai answered, "No! But to him whom Yahweh and this people and all Israel have chosen, "to him" I belong, and with him I remain. And besides! Whom shall I be serving? His son, of course! As I served before your father, so will I serve before you."

Absalom then said to Ahithophel, "Give us your advice as to what we should do." Ahithophel answered, "Go in to your father's concubines, whom he left to look after the palace. Then all Israel will hear that you have made yourself obnoxious to your father, and the courage of all your followers will be strengthened." So they set up the bridal tent for Absalom on the roof, and he went in to his father's concubines in the view of all Israel. For the counsel given by Ahithophel in those days was esteemed as highly as a divine oracle: such was the authority of all Ahithophel's counsel both to David and to Absalom.

Ahithophel then made a further proposal to Absalom: "Let me choose 12,000 men, and I will start in pursuit of David this night, and come upon him while he is weary and disheartened; I will thus put him in fright, and all the people that are with him will flee, so that I can kill the king alone.

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1—2 Supplying conjecturally an accidental omission in the text.

Then I will bring all the people round to you, 'as a bride turns to her husband. It is but one man's life<sup>1</sup> that you seek, "and" the people as a whole will have peace." This advice seemed very plausible to Absalom and all the elders of Israel. However, Absalom said, "Call Hushai the Archite, and let us hear also what he has to say." When Hushai came in Absalom told him what Ahithophel had just said, and asked, "Shall we act on his advice? If you are of a different opinion, speak your mind!" Hushai answered to Absalom, "The counsel that Ahithophel has given this time is not sound!" "You know yourself," he continued, "that your father and his men are veterans, and full of grim courage as a wild she-bear robbed of her cub. Moreover, your father is a wary soldier, who will not spend the night with the army; you may be sure that he is now hidden in some ravine, or some other place. If now, on the first onset, some of "our people" fall, those who hear of it will say, 'A defeat has been inflicted on the adherents of Absalom!' Then will even the bravest man, though he has the courage of a lion, grow faint-hearted; for all Israel knows that your father is a hero and his companions brave men. My advice, therefore is this: Let all Israel—from Dan to Beersheba be gathered to you, numerous as the sand by the sea-shore, and you in person shall march "in their midst." Then when we come on him in whatever place he is to be found, we shall light on him in numbers like dewdrops falling on the earth; and of him and all the men that are with him not one shall be left. But if it should be a city to which he has retired, in that case all Israel will "bring" ropes to that city, and we will drag it into the valley, till not a pebble remains there!" Then Absalom and all the Israelites said, "The counsel of Hushai the Archite is better than that of Ahithophel!" For Yahweh had so ordained that the good counsel of Ahithophel should be frustrated, in order that he might bring disaster on Absalom.

Hushai then told Zadok and Abiathar the priests what advice Ahithophel had given to Absalom, and the elders of Israel, and what he himself had advised, and said, "Send quickly, now, and warn David not to pass this night by the fords of the wilderness,

<sup>1</sup>— LXX; MT unintelligible.

<sup>2</sup>— LXX, etc.; MT "in the battle."

but by all means to cross (the Jordan), lest the king and all who are with him be destroyed." Now Jonathan and Ahimez were waiting at the well Rogel, and a maid went from time to time and brought them news, which they would carry to King David; for they durst not let themselves be seen by entering the city. On this occasion, however, a lad saw them, and informed Abshalom. The two of them, therefore, departed in all haste, and came to the house of a man in Bahurim, who had a well in his courtyard. Into this they went down, and the man's wife fetched a sheet and placed it over the mouth of the well, and spread bruised corn over it, so that there was nothing to excite curiosity. So when Abshalom's servants came to the house and asked the woman where Ahimez and Jonathan were, she said, "They are gone on 'from here' to the water," and after a fruitless search they returned to Jerusalem. After they had gone, Ahimez and Jonathan came up out of the well, and went with their message to King David, and said to him, "Be up, and cross the water instantly; for so and so has Abithophel counselled with regard to you." Then David and all the people that were with him got up and crossed the Jordan; and by morning light they were all over Jordan to the last man.

But Abithophel, seeing that his advice was not followed, saddled his ass, and went home to his city. There, after settling his affairs, he hanged himself and died, and was buried in his father's grave.

(13) *David in Mahanaim* (xvii. 24-29).

David had already reached Mahanaim when Abshalom crossed the Jordan, accompanied by all the men of Israel. Instead of Job Abshalom had appointed Amasa to command the army. (This Amasa was the illegitimate son of an Ishmaelite<sup>1</sup> named Jithra; his mother being Abigail, the daughter of Jesse,<sup>2</sup> the sister of Zeruiah, Job's mother.) Israel and Abshalom camped in the land of Gilead.

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<sup>1</sup> Not in our sense, however. He was probably the issue of an irregular marriage, in which the usual purchase-price had not been paid to the father of the bride.

<sup>2</sup> So 1 Chr. ii. 17, and a MS. of LXX; MT "Israelite."

<sup>3</sup> So Lac.; compare 1 Chr. ii. 16; MT "Nahai."



When David came to Mahanaim, Shobi the son of Nahash, from Rabbah of the Ammonites, Machir the son of Ammiel, both Lo-debar, and Barzillai the Gileadite, from Rogelim, brought couches<sup>1</sup> to lie on, rugs,<sup>2</sup> basins and earthen vessels. They also brought wheat, barley, meal, parched corn, beans, lentils, ° °, honey, curdled milk, sheep and . . (?) of the herd; these they brought to David and his followers to eat, for they said, "The folks are hungry, tired and thirsty in the wilderness."

(14) *The Battle in the Wood: the Death of Absalom* (xviii. 1-18).

David then reviewed the forces at his disposal, and appointed officers for each regiment and company. The whole army he divided into three corps<sup>3</sup>: the first under the command of Joab, the second under Abiahai the son of Zeruiah, Joab's brother, and the third under Ittai of Gath. The king further announced to the people his intention to take the field with them in person; but the people answered, "That you shall not do! For if we should be put to flight they will not concern themselves about us—even if half of us were killed they would not care; but "you" are worth ten thousand of the like of us. Besides, it is better that you should be in readiness to send us assistance from the city." The king said, "I submit to your wish." So the king stood by the side of the gate, while the troops marched out by companies and regiments. But the king laid this charge on Joab, Abiahai and Ittai: "Mind you deal gently for my sake with young Absalom!" All the people heard the king give this command concerning Absalom to all the generals.

The army then marched out to the open country against the Israelites; and the battle took place in the wood of Ephraim.<sup>4</sup> There the Israelites were defeated by David's men; and the slaughter that day was frightful—as many as 20,000 men. The battle extended over the whole surrounding country; and the wood accounted for the death of more men than perished by the sword that day. In the confusion, Absalom came accidentally on the soldiers of David. He was riding on a mule, and

<sup>1</sup> LXX.

<sup>2-3</sup> So Luc.: MT "sent."

<sup>3-3</sup> Luc. reads "Mahanaim," which is possibly correct.

the mule ran under the branches of a great oak-tree,<sup>2</sup> and his head was caught fast in the oak, so that he was suspended<sup>3</sup> between heaven and earth, while the mule that was under him ran on. Some man saw this and told Joab, "I saw Absalom hanging in an oak!" "You saw him!" said Joab. "Why did you not strike him down there and then? I should then have had the pleasure of presenting you with ten silver crowns<sup>4</sup> and a girdle." But the man answered Joab, "And if I had a thousand silver crowns weighed into my hand, I would not lay a hand on the king's son; for in the hearing of us all the king charged you and Abiahai and Ittai in these words: 'Have a care for my sake of young Absalom.' Ay, and if I *had* acted treacherously at the risk of my life—for there is nothing that the king will not discover!—you would leave me in the lurch." Joab said, "I cannot stand arguing with you all day!"<sup>5</sup> and, taking three darts in his hand, he went and thrust them into Absalom's heart. While he was still alive in the thick branches of the oak, ten youths, armour-bearers of Joab, came up and smote Absalom dead. Joab then sounded the trumpet, and the people ceased pursuing the Israelites, for Joab held them back. And they took Absalom and threw him into a great hole in the wood, and erected a huge cairn of stones over him. All the Israelites had meanwhile fled to their several homes.

[But Absalom had during his lifetime taken a stone and set it up for himself as a monument in the King's Vale; for he thought to himself, "I have no son to keep my name in remembrance." Hence he called the monument by his own name, and it is known as Absalom's monument to this day.]

(15) *How the News was brought to David* (xviii. 19-32).

Now Ahimaaz the son of Zadok had said<sup>5</sup> to Joab<sup>3</sup>, "Let me run and carry to the king the good news that Yahweh has freed him from the hand of his foes." But Joab answered,

<sup>2</sup> Strictly "terebinth."

<sup>3</sup> LXX, etc.

<sup>4</sup> Lit. "shekels."

<sup>4-5</sup> Or (following Luc., etc.), "So then I must make a beginning before you!"

<sup>5-6</sup> So Luc.

"You are not the man to carry tidings to-day; another time you shall carry tidings, but not to-day, seeing the king's son is dead." And Joab said to a Cushite, "Go and tell the king what you have seen;" and the Cushite, bowing low to Joab, ran off. But Ahimaaz the son of Zadok again said to Joab, "Come what may, let me run after the Cushite." "Why would you run, my son," answered Joab, "when no reward for good news can be paid to you?" He said<sup>1</sup>, "All the same, I will run!" "Very well, then," said Joab, "run!" So Ahimaaz ran off, and taking the way of the Jordan Oval he outran the Cushite.

David was sitting in the archway between the outer and inner gates, when the watchman went to the roof of the gate on the wall, and looking out saw a single man running. The watchman called out and told the king, who replied, "If he is alone he brings tidings." As the man drew nearer and nearer the watchman saw another running, and called to the gate<sup>2</sup>, "I see another<sup>3</sup> man running alone." "Then he also brings tidings," said the king. The watchman called, "The running of the foremost looks to me like the running of Ahimaaz, Zadok's son." "A good man!" remarked the king. "He will bring good news." As Ahimaaz<sup>4</sup> drew near<sup>5</sup> he called to the king, "All's well!" and throwing himself on his face to the ground before the king he said, "All praise to Yahweh your God, who has delivered up the men who raised their hand against your Majesty!" The king asked, "Is young Absalom safe?" and Ahimaaz answered, "I saw a great commotion<sup>6</sup> when the king's servant Joab sent me off<sup>7</sup>; but I do not know what was going on." "Step aside," said the king, "and stand here." So he went to one side and waited; and straightway the Cushite came and said, "Prepare yourself for good news, your Majesty! Yahweh has this day vindicated your right against all your adversaries." The king asked the Cushite, "Is young Absalom safe?" The Cushite answered, "May your Majesty's enemies

<sup>1-2</sup> LXX, etc.

<sup>3</sup> LXX, etc.; MT "porter."

<sup>5-6</sup> Lxx.; MT "called."

<sup>4-6</sup> Slightly altered text.

and all who have rebelled against you, share the fate of that young man ! ”

(16) *David's Grief for Absalom* (xviii. 33-xix. 8a).

Then the king in great agitation went up to the roof-chamber over the gate, and wept ; and all the way as he went he kept repeating, “ O, my son Absalom ! My son ! My son Absalom ! Would that I had died instead of you ! Absalom, my son ! My son ! ”

When it was reported to Joab that the king was weeping and mourning for Absalom, the victory was that day turned to mourning for all the people ; for they heard that the king was grieved for his son. The people crept furtively into the city that day, like men who are ashamed of having turned their backs in battle. And all the while the king sat with his face covered, and wailed aloud, “ O my son Absalom ! Absalom, my son, my son ! ”

At last Joab went in to the king in the house, and said, “ You have this day shamed the faces of all your servants who have saved your life this day, and the lives of your sons and daughters your wives and ° ° concubines, by showing love for those who hate you, and hatred for those who love you ! For you make it plain to-day that officers and men are nothing to you. Now I see that if Absalom were living and all of us dead to-day, it would please you well ! But now, rouse yourself ! Go out and speak kindly to your servants. For I swear by Yahweh that unless you show yourself, not a man will spend this night with you. And that will be a worse misfortune for you than all that you have come through from your youth till now ! ” Then the king rose up and took his seat in the gate. And when it was announced to all the people that the king was sitting in the gate, they all presented themselves before the king.

(17) *David's Home-coming : Scenes by the Jordan* (xix. 8b-40).

The Israelites had now fled to their homes ; and there was great dissension throughout the whole nation. In all the tribes of Israel people were saying, “ The king saved us from the hand of our enemies ; it was he who freed us from the grip of the Philistines ; and yet the king has had to flee the country before

Absalom ! And Absalom, whom we had appointed king over us, has fallen in battle—why then is there no talk of bringing back the king ?” When these words of the Israelites reached his ears \* \* \*, king David sent a message to Zadok and Abiathar the priests to this effect, “Speak to the elders of Judah, and ask them why they should be behindhand in bringing about the king’s return home. Say to them, ‘You are my kinamen, of my bone and flesh ; why are you the last to bring the king back ?’ And say to Amasa, ‘You are of my bone and flesh ! God do to me what he will if you are not made my commander-in-chief for good instead of Joab !’” Thus “he swayed” the minds of all the men of Judah, so that they sent a unanimous request to the king to return with his whole court.

The king then started on his homeward journey, and reached the Jordan ; while the men of Judah came to Gilgal to meet the king and escort him across the river. Shimei also, the son of Gera, the Benjamite from Bahurim, came down in haste with the men of Judah to meet king David, bringing 1,000 men of Benjamin with him ; and Ziba, the servant of Saul’s family, with his fifteen sons and twenty slaves, had hurried to the Jordan before the king arrived “and had crossed” the ford that they might bring the king over, and do anything he wanted. So Shimei the son of Gera threw himself down before the king as he was about to cross the Jordan, and said, “Let not my lord hold me guilty, nor call to mind the heinous offence which your servant committed on the day when your Majesty left Jerusalem ; let not the king lay it to heart, for your servant is conscious of his sin. And to-day, as you see, I am the first of all the house of Joseph to come down and meet the king.” Here Abishai the son of Zeruiah broke in and said, “Shall Shimei’s life be spared for this, when he cursed the anointed of Yahweh ?” But David said, “What have I to do with you, sons of Zeruiah, that you should play the tempter to me<sup>a</sup> this day ? Should any man be put to death in Israel this day ? Do I not this day know that I am king over Israel ?” The king then said to Shimei, “You shall not die,” and gave him his oath upon it.

Meribaal, the grandson of Saul, was another who had come

<sup>a</sup>—A half-verse transposed.

<sup>b</sup> See p. 72, n. 1—1.

down to meet the king : he had not dressed his feet, nor trimmed his beard, nor washed his clothes from the day of the king's departure to the day when he came safely back. When he came "from" Jerusalem to meet the king, the king asked him, "Why did you not go with me, Meribaal?" He answered, "Your Majesty, my servant has played me false! I gave him the order to saddle<sup>1</sup> my ass, that I might ride on it, and go with the king, for I am lame. Instead of that he has slandered me to your Majesty. But your Majesty is as the angel of God : do to me then as you please. For seeing my whole family were but dead men before your Majesty, and you placed your servant among your table-companions, what further right have I to complain to the king?" The king said to him, "Why so many words? I decide that you and Ziba shall divide the estate." "Let him take the whole," said Meribaal to the king, "now that your Majesty has come home in safety!"

Barzillai the Gileadite had also come down from Rogelim and accompanied the king to the Jordan to see him off \* . \* Now Barzillai was a very old man, eighty years of age ; it was he who had supported the king all the time he was in Mahanaim, for he was very rich. The king said to him, "You must come along with me, and let me provide for "your old age" in Jerusalem. But Barzillai answered, "How many years have I yet to live that I should go up with the king to Jerusalem? I am eighty years old this day ; how could I distinguish one thing from another? Could your servant know the taste of what he ate or drank ; or listen to the voice of singers, male or female? Why then should your servant be any longer a burden to your Majesty? Your servant would accompany the king a little way \* . \* ; why should the king reward me so liberally? Let your servant go back and die in his own city, by the grave of his father and mother. But your servant Chimham here may go over with your Majesty : treat him as you think fit." The king answered, "Then let Chimham come over with me ; and I will treat him as you would wish ; and anything you choose to ask I will do for you." All the people then crossed the

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<sup>1</sup>— LXX, etc. ; MT "I proposed to saddle."

<sup>2</sup>— LXX, etc.

Jordan, while the king stayed<sup>1</sup> to kiss Barzillai, and bid him good-bye, after which he returned to his home. So the king crossed over to Gilgal, taking Chimham with him; and all the people of Judah <sup>went on with</sup> the king, as well as the half of Israel.

(18) *The Insurrection of Sheba* (xix. 41-xx. 23).

Then all of a sudden the Israelites came to the king and said to him, "Why have our brothers the men of Judah carried you off, and brought the king and all his family over the Jordan [and all David's men with him]?" The men of Judah answered the men of Israel, "Why, because the king is my near kinsman! Why in the world should you get angry at that? Have we eaten any part of the king, or has he been kidnapped by us?" But the men of Israel retorted, "I have ten shares in the king; moreover I am the <sup>firstborn</sup> and not you! Why have you slighted me? Was I not the first <sup>to speak of bringing back the king?</sup>" But the language of the men of Judah was more vehement than that of the men of Israel.

Now it so happened that there was present an ill-affected man named Sheba, the son of Bichri, a Benjamite. This man sounded a trumpet and cried,

"No share have we in David,  
And no reversion in the son of Jesse!  
Each man to his tent, O Israel!"

Then all the Israelites fell away from David, and followed Sheba the son of Bichri, while the men of Judah clung to their king, and accompanied him from the Jordan to Jerusalem.

The first thing the king did on entering his palace in Jerusalem was to take the ten concubines whom he had left to keep the palace, and put them in confinement, where he maintained them without going near them. They remained shut up till the day of their death—<sup>widows in their husband's lifetime.</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Luc., etc.; MT "crossed."

<sup>2-3</sup> LXX; MT "brought over."

<sup>3-6</sup> LXX; MT "in David."

<sup>4-4</sup> This seems to be the meaning of the LXX equivalent of the Heb phrase. MT suggests in "living widowhood"!

Then the king said to Amasa, "Call out for me the men of Judah, and present yourself here within three days!" So Amasa went to call out the men of Judah. But when he failed to appear at the appointed time, David said to Abishai,<sup>1</sup> "Now Sheba the son of Bichri will do us more harm than Absalom. Take you your lord's servants and pursue him, lest he get into fortified cities and elude our search." There went out accordingly <sup>2</sup>after Abishai<sup>3</sup> Joab with the Crethi and Plethi and all the Guards; they marched out from Jerusalem in pursuit of Sheba the son of Bichri.

When they were at the great stone in Gibeon, Amasa appeared in front of them. Now Joab <sup>4</sup>was wearing his military coat, with a sword girt on over it, fastened round his loins in its sheath: this had slipped out and fallen, and he had picked it up with his left hand.<sup>4</sup> Then he said to Amasa, "Are you well, my brother?" taking him by the beard with his right hand to kiss him. Amasa was not on his guard against the sword in Joab's "left" hand; so Joab stabbed him with it in the belly, and his entrails were shed on the ground, and he died without a second stroke. Joab and his brother Abishai then pursued Sheba the son of Bichri, while one of Joab's men stood over Amasa and cried, "Let him who loves Joab and is on David's side follow Joab!" But Amasa lay weltering in blood in the middle of the road; and the man, seeing that all the people stood still, dragged the body out of the road into the field, and threw a garment over it, when he saw that every one who came up to it stood still. After he had thus "removed" it out of the way, they all passed on after Joab in pursuit of Sheba the son of Bichri.

This man passed through all the tribes of Israel till he came to Abel of Beth-Maachah, where all the Bichrites<sup>5</sup> gathered together, and entered it after him. But "Joab and his men"

<sup>1</sup> The Syriac version reads "Joab," which some prefer.

<sup>2-3</sup> An uncertain rendering of a difficult phrase.

<sup>3-3</sup> MT "after the men of."

<sup>4-4</sup> The text is very ambiguous and obscure, and leaves much to be supplied. The above is only an attempt to describe the incident on one interpretation of the meaning.

<sup>5</sup> An emendation based on LXX.



came and besieged him in Abel of Beth-Maachah, and raised a mound against the city<sup>1</sup>; and all Joab's people set about the work of destruction so as to bring down the wall. Then a wise woman, 'standing on the outer wall,' called from the city, "Hearken! Hearken! Ask Joab to come here: I wish to speak with him." When he came near her, the woman said, "Are you Joab?" and he said, "I am." She said, "Listen to what your handmaid has to say!" He replied, "I am listening." Then she spoke as follows: "It was a common saying in former days, 'Let them inquire in Abel' and in Dan whether that which<sup>2</sup> the faithful in Israel 'have ordained has gone out of fashion'. You are seeking to 'lay waste' a mother-city in Israel: why should you destroy the inheritance of Yahweh?" Joab answered, "That is very far from my intention! I wish neither to destroy nor to lay waste. The matter does not stand so; but there is a man from the hills of Ephraim, Sheba the son of Bichri by name, who has raised his hand against king David: deliver up him alone, and I will withdraw from the city." "Then," said the woman, "his head shall be thrown to you over the wall." So the woman with her wisdom<sup>3</sup> talked over the whole city; and they cut off the head of Sheba the son of Bichri, and threw it to Joab. Joab then sounded the trumpet, and they 'withdrew' from the city and dispersed to their several homes, while Joab returned to the king in Jerusalem.

- (19) *A Second List of David's Officials* (xx. 23-26). [Comp. viii. 16-18, p. 94.]

Joab was commander of the whole army<sup>1</sup>; Benaiah the son of Jehoiada was over the "Crethi" and Plethi; Adoram (?) was over the labour-gangs. Jehoshaphat the son of Ahimad was chancellor; Sheva (?) secretary of State; Zadok and Abiathar were priests; also Ira of Jair was a priest of David's.

<sup>1-1</sup> Transferring a clause from v. 15 to v. 16.

<sup>2-2</sup> So LXX; MT hardly translatable.

<sup>3-3</sup> LXX; MT "came to all the people."

#### 4. SUPPLEMENTARY EXTRACTS ON DAVID'S REIGN (XXI.-XXIV.).

*These four chapters form an appendix to the Book of Samuel—breaking the connection between 2 Sam. xx. 22 and 1 Kings i. 1—and must have been added to the book after the separation of Kings from Samuel. They are here rearranged in accordance with the subject matter: narrative (xxi. 1-14; xxiv.); annalistic (xxi. 15-22; xxiii. 8-39); and poetical (xxiii. 1-7; xxii.).*

##### (1) *The Gibeonites' Revenge on Saul (xxi. 1-14).*

In the days of David there was a famine which lasted three years in succession. When David consulted the oracle of Yahweh, the answer was, "On Saul and on his house lies blood-guilt," inasmuch as he slew the Gibeonites.<sup>1</sup> The king then summoned the Gibeonites, and said to them—it must be understood that the Gibeonites did not belong to Israel, but to the remnant of the Amorites; and Saul, out of zeal for Israel [and Judah], but in violation of the oath which the Israelites had sworn to them, had sought to extirpate them. David, then asked the Gibeonites—"What shall I do for you, and how can I make atonement, that you may bless the people of Yahweh?" The Gibeonites answered, "There is no question of silver or gold between me and Saul and his house, <sup>2</sup>but of blood<sup>3</sup>; and we have not the right to put any man in Israel to death." He said, "What do you require that I should do for you?" The Gibeonites replied, "From the sons of the man who harassed us, and meant to exterminate us, so that we should have no footing anywhere in the territory of Israel—from his sons let seven be given up to us, that we may impale them before Yahweh<sup>3</sup> in Gibeon on the hill <sup>2</sup>of Yahweh." The king agreed to give them up. The king, however, spared Meribaal, the son of Jonathan, Saul's son, because of the oath by Yahweh which was made between them—that is, between David and Jonathan the son of Saul. So he took the two sons whom Rizpah the daughter of Aiah had borne to Saul, Armoni and Meribaal; and the five sons of Saul's daughter Merab<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1-2</sup> Implied, but not expressed, in the text.

<sup>2-3</sup> So LXX partly.

<sup>3</sup> So Luc., Syr., etc.; MT Michal (wrongly).

whom she had borne to Adriel the son of Barzillai of Meholah ; and delivered them up to the Gibeonites, who impaled them on the hill before Yahweh ; all the seven dying together. It was in the first days of harvest that they were executed, in the beginning of barley harvest. And Rizpah the daughter of Aiah took her mourning-garment and spread it as a bed for herself on the rock from the beginning of harvest until rain had fallen from heaven on the corpses, keeping the birds of the air from lighting upon them by day, and warding off the wild beasts by night.

When David was told what Rizpah the daughter of Aiah, Saul's concubine, had done, he caused the bones of Saul and his son Jonathan to be taken from the citizens of Jabesh-Gilead (who had stolen them from the public square of Bethshean, where the Philistines had hung them when they defeated Saul at Gilboa), and brought them up thence. And having collected the bones of the impaled men, they buried them "with" those of Saul and his son Jonathan in the territory of Benjamin, at Zela, in the grave of his father Kish. After all was done according to the king's command, God yielded to entreaty on behalf of the land.

### (2) *The Census and the Pestilence* (xxiv.).

Another time Yahweh's wrath broke forth against Israel ; and he incited David against them by suggesting to him to take a census of Israel and Judah. So the king ordered Joab and the officers of the army under him to make a tour through all the tribes of Israel from Dan to Beersheba, and enrol the people, so that he might know how many there were of them. Joab answered the king, "May Yahweh your God multiply the people; be they ever so numerous, a hundredfold, and may your Majesty live to see it ! But why should your Majesty desire such a thing ?" However, the king's command overbore the opinion of Joab and the officers of the army ; and they set out "from" the king's presence to enrol the people of Israel.

Crossing the Jordan, they began "from Aroer and" the city that

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<sup>1</sup>—<sup>1</sup> So 1 Chr. xxi. 2 and Luc. 1. MT "the commander of."

<sup>2</sup>—<sup>2</sup> Luc. ; MT "encamped in the south of."

lies in the (Arnon) valley, travelling in the direction of the Gadites and on to Jazer. Then they came to Gilead, and so on to the country of 'the Hittites towards Kadesh.' When they reached Dan they "turned thence" to Sidon, and came to the fortress of Tyre, and all the cities of the Hivites and Canaanites. Thence they journeyed to the Negeb of Judah at Beersheba. When they had gone through the whole land, they returned to Jerusalem, after an absence of nine months and twenty days, and Joab handed to the king the numbers of the people enrolled; viz., Israel, 800,000 men of war wielding the sword, and the Judeans 500,000 men.

But David's conscience smote him afterwards "for" having numbered the people, and he confessed to Yahweh, "I have sinned greatly in what I have done. But now, O Yahweh, pass over the guilt of thy servant, for I was infatuated." But the word of Yahweh had already come to Gad the prophet, David's seer, commanding him to go and say to David, "Thus speaks Yahweh: Three things I put in your choice: decide which of them I shall do to you." So when David rose in the morning,<sup>3</sup> Gad came to him and told him this, and said, "Shall a three<sup>4</sup> years' famine visit your land? Or will you flee three months before your enemy, <sup>5</sup>pursued by the sword? Or shall there be three days' pestilence in the land? Now consider, and see what answer I am to take to him who sends me!" David said to Gad, "I am in a terrible dilemma! Let us fall into the hands of Yahweh, for his compassion is great: into the hands of man I would not fall." So David chose the pestilence.

It was in the time of wheat harvest when the plague broke out among the people<sup>6</sup>, and there died of the people from Dan

<sup>1-1</sup> Luc.

<sup>2-2</sup> A necessary emendation.

<sup>3-3</sup> The phrase is transferred from the beginning of verse 11.

<sup>4</sup> So 1 Chro. xxi. 12; MT "seven."

<sup>5-5</sup> After 1 Chr. xxi. 12; MT "while he pursues you."

<sup>6-6</sup> LXX, etc.; MT "And Yahweh gave a pestilence in Israel from the morning even to the appointed time" (?).

to Ben-hadad 70,000 men. "When David saw the angel who was spreading destruction among the people, he prayed to Yahweh and said: "See! it is I who have sinned—I who have transgressed; but these are the sheep; what have they done? Let thy hand light on me and on my father's house."<sup>1</sup> And as the angel stretched out his hand towards Jerusalem to destroy it, Yahweh relented of the evil, and said to the angel who was spreading destruction among the people, "Enough! Now stay thy hand!" The angel of Yahweh was just then standing beside the threshing-floor of Arauna the Jebusite.

That day Gad came to David and said, "Go up and rear an altar to Yahweh on the threshing-floor of Arauna the Jebusite;" and David went up at Gad's bidding, as Yahweh had commanded. When Arauna, "who was busy threshing wheat", looked out and saw the king and his courtiers advancing towards him, he came out and prostrated himself before the king, and asked, "For what purpose does your Majesty pay this visit to his servant?" "I am come," said David, "to buy the threshing-floor from you, in order to build an altar to Yahweh, so that the plague may be averted from the people." Arauna said to David, "My lord the king may take and offer up in sacrifice whatever he pleases! Here are the oxen for a burnt-offering; the threshing-drags and ox-harness for wood. All these 'your Majesty's servant's presents to the king. May Yahweh," he said, "be gracious to you!" But the king answered Arauna, "By no means! I will certainly buy it from you at its proper price. I would not bring to Yahweh my God burnt-offerings that cost me nothing!" So David bought the threshing-floor and the oxen for fifty silver crowns.<sup>4</sup>

Then David built an altar there to Yahweh, and offered burnt-offerings and peace-offerings. And Yahweh yielded to entreaty on behalf of the land, and the plague was warded off from Israel.

### (3) *Some Exploits of David's Warriors* (xxi. 15-22).

The Philistines were again at war with Israel; and David

<sup>1-2</sup> Ps. 16 and 17 transposed.

<sup>2-3</sup> 1 Chr. xxi. 120.

<sup>3-5</sup> MT "Arauna."

<sup>4</sup> "Shekels"; 50 shekels would be the equivalent of nearly £7 as bullion.

went down with his men, and encamped in Gob<sup>1</sup>. As they were fighting the Philistines there, <sup>2</sup>Dod<sup>2</sup>, a descendant of the giants, who had a spear weighing 13 lbs. in bronze, and was girt with a new \* \* \* (?), <sup>2</sup>attacked David<sup>3</sup> and thought to kill him. But Abishai the son of Zeruiah came to his rescue, and smote the Philistine dead. At that time David's followers made an oath and said ° °, "You shall not henceforth go with us into battle, lest you extinguish the lamp of Israel."

After this there was another battle with the Philistines in Gob; when Sibbechai the Hushathite slew Saph, another of the descendants of the giants.

At another battle with the Philistines in Gob, Elhanan the son of Jair<sup>4</sup> ° °, the Bethlehemite, slew Goliath of Gath, who had a spear-shaft like a weaver's beam.

Again there was a battle in Gath, where a <sup>4</sup>very tall<sup>5</sup> man who had six fingers on each hand, and six toes on each foot, four and twenty in all—he too was a descendant of the giants—flouted Israel, and was slain by Jonathan the son of David's brother Shimci.

All these four belonged to the race of the giants in Gath, and fell by the hands of David and his men.

#### (4) *A List of David's Heroes* (xxiii. 8-12; 17b-39; 13-17a).

The following are the names of David's heroes:

<sup>5</sup>Ishbaal the Hachmonite<sup>5</sup>, the chief of the <sup>6</sup>Three<sup>6</sup>. He <sup>7</sup>swung his spear<sup>7</sup> over 800 slain men at one time. Next to him of the Three heroes came Eleazar the son of Dodi ° ° the Ahohite: <sup>8</sup>he was<sup>8</sup> with David <sup>8</sup>in Pasdammim when<sup>8</sup> the Philistines were gathered there for battle. When the men of

<sup>1-1</sup> Representing the senseless "and Ishbi Benob" of the next verse.

<sup>2-2</sup> The words "Dod attacked" in place of "David was weary" of MT, omitting "Ishbi Benob."

<sup>3</sup> So 1 Chr. xi. 5.

<sup>4-4</sup> 1 Chr. xx. 6.

<sup>5-5</sup> A reading based on 1 Chr. xi. 11, Luc., etc.

<sup>6-6</sup> Luc.

<sup>7-7</sup> 1 Chr. xi. 11. [The phrase probably means "slew."—Ed.]

<sup>8-8</sup> 1 Chr. xi. 13.

Israel fell back, he stood his ground and slashed away at the Philistines till his arm was weary, and his hand was glued to his sword; and Yahweh wrought a great victory that day. The rest of the people turned and followed him only to plunder.—After him came Shammah, the son of Elah<sup>1</sup> the Hararite: the Philistines were assembled °at Lehi°, and there there was a plot of ground full of lentils. When the people fled before the Philistines, he took his stand in the middle of the plot and defended it, and defeated the Philistines. Thus Yahweh wrought a great victory.—°These are the exploits of the Three heroes.

Of the °Thirty° Abishai, Joab's brother, the son of Zeruiah, was chief: he swung his spear over 300 slain men, and was the most famous of the °Thirty°. Above the °Thirty° he was honoured, and became their captain, but the level of the Three he did not reach. Benaiah, the son of Jehoiada, °a brave° man, with many exploits to his credit, came from Kabzeel; he slew the two °sons of° Ariel °of° Moab; and also went down into a cistern and killed a lion on a snowy day. He further slew a tall<sup>2</sup> Egyptian who was armed with a spear; going at him with a stick, he wrenched the spear from the Egyptian's hand, and killed him with his own spear. Such were the deeds of Benaiah the son of Jehoiada: he was famous among the °Thirty° heroes. Above the Thirty he was honoured, but to the level of the Three he did not reach; and David put him at the head of his bodyguard.

To the Thirty belonged further: Asahel the brother of Joab; Elhanan the son of Dodo of Bethlehem; Shammah from Harod; °Elikah from Harod°; Helez from °Beth°-Pelet; Ira the son of Ikesh from Tekoa; Abiezer from Anathoth; Sibbechai<sup>7</sup> from Hushah; Zalmon from Ahoah; Mahrai from Netophah; °Heled° the son of Baanah from Netophah;

<sup>1</sup> Luc.; MT "Aga."

<sup>2</sup> Vs. 13-17a are transferred to the end of the list.

<sup>3-3</sup> So Syr. and MSS.

<sup>4-4</sup> Inserted with LXX.

<sup>5</sup> 1 Chr. xi. 23.

<sup>6-6</sup> Omitted in LXX, Syr. and 1 Chron. xi. 27.

<sup>7</sup> 1 Chron. xi. 29.

Ittai the son of Ribai from Gibeah of Benjamin; Benaiah from Pirathon; Hiddai from the valleys of Gaash; Abibaal<sup>1</sup> from Beth-Arba; Azmaveth from Bahurim; Eljahba from Shaalbim; <sup>2</sup>Jashen the Gunite<sup>3</sup> Jonathan "the son of" Shammah from Harar; Ahiam the son of Sharar from Harar; Eliphelet the son of . . . (?) from Beth-Maachah; Eliam the son of Ahithophel from Gilo; Hezro from Carmel; Paarai from Arab; Jigael<sup>3</sup> the son of Nathan from Zobah; Bani the Gadite; Zelek the Ammonite; Naharai from Beeroth, the armour-bearer of Joab the son of Zeruiah; Ira from "Jattir"; Gareb from "Jattir"; Uriah the Hittite;—in all thirty-seven.

Once when David was in the "fastness" of Adullam, and a company of Philistines were encamped in the plain of Rephaim, "three" of the Thirty went down " " and came to David "at the rock". David was then in the fastness, and a Philistine garrison was at the same time in Bethlehem. David was seized with a longing which he uttered in the cry, "O for a draught from the well of Bethlehem by the city gate!" Hearing this the three heroes broke through the camp of the Philistines, drew water from the well at the gate of Bethlehem, and brought it to David. But he refused to drink it; and pouring it out as a libation to Yahweh, he said, "God forbid that I should do such a thing! It is the blood of men who have gone at the risk of their lives—shall I drink that?"—and would not drink it.

(5) *The Last Words of David* (xxiii. 1-7).

These are David's last words:

Oracle of David, Jesse's son,  
Oracle of one who was raised on high,—  
The anointed of Jacob's God,  
The idol of Israel's songs!

<sup>1</sup> MT "Abi-Albon"; 1 Chr. xi. 32 reads "Abiel"; originally probably Abibaal.

<sup>2</sup>—<sup>3</sup> Emended from 1 Chr. xi. 34 and Luc.

<sup>3</sup> 1 Chr. xi. 38 reads "Joel."

<sup>4</sup>—<sup>4</sup> So 1 Chr. xi. 15 and Luc.; MT might be restored so as to read "at the beginning of harvest."



Yahweh's spirit speaks in me,  
His word is on my tongue.  
The God of Jacob<sup>1</sup> said to me,  
The Rock of Israel spoke :

"Who rules o'er men in righteousness—  
Who rules in godly fear—  
Is like morning light at sunrise—  
Like cloudless morn, that after rain  
"Brings verdure forth" from the earth."

Yea, stands not so my house with God ?  
A lasting covenant he made with me,  
Ordered in all ways and sure.  
Yea, all my weal and all "my" joy,  
Shall he not make to flourish ?

But reprobates—like wind-driven thorns are they all !  
They are not to be grasped with the hand.  
Who touches them, with iron and spear-shaft armed  
must be :  
The fire must wholly consume them ! ° °

(6) *A Psalm attributed to David (xxii.—Ps. xviii.).*

These are the words of David's song to Yahweh, on the day when Yahweh had delivered him from the hand of all his enemies, and from the hand of Saul :

"I love thee, O Yahweh, my strength°—  
Yahweh, my rock and my fastness, ° °  
My God, my Rock where I hide me,  
My shield, my horn of salvation !  
[My fortress °and refuge, my deliverer from violence°.]  
"All praise be to Yahweh !" I cry ;  
From my enemies I am delivered.

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<sup>1</sup> So Old Latin Version ; MT "Israel."

<sup>2</sup>—<sup>3</sup> Emended text ; MT "through brightness young grass (springs)" (?).

<sup>3</sup>—<sup>5</sup> A phrase omitted.

—<sup>6</sup> Additions, omissions and changes in accordance with the text of Ps. xviii.

For billows of death closed o'er me,  
Streams of perdition assailed me;  
Cords of the underworld bound me,  
Death's snares encompassed my feet.

In my anguish I called upon Yahweh;  
"Loud" to my God did I "cry";  
And he heard in his temple my voice,  
My loud cry "entered" his ears.

Then shook and trembled the earth,  
The pillars of heaven did quake,  
And reeled because of his wrath:  
Smoke went up from his nostrils,  
Devouring fire from his mouth;  
Fire-coals burned fiercely before him.

And he bent the heavens and came down,  
With dark clouds under his feet.  
He rode on a cherub and flew,  
And "swooped down" on the wings of the wind;  
Made darkness a "covert" around him,  
"Dark" waters, and "thickness" of clouds.  
From the brightness before him "broke forth"  
"Lightning and" fiery coals.

From heaven did Yahweh thunder,  
And the Highest uttered his voice;  
Sent arrows and scattered "my foes",  
Shot lightnings, and routed "them all."

Then Ocean's bed was laid bare,  
Uncovered the pillars of earth:  
At "thy" rebuke, O Yahweh,  
At the blast of "thy" nostrils' breath.

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1—1 Slight emendation.

2—2 MT "them."

3—3 Additions, omissions and changes in accordance with the text of Ps. xviii.

He sent from on high and took me,  
Drew me from waters many:  
Saved me from enemies fierce,  
From foes too strong for me.  
In my day of distress they assailed me;  
But in Yahweh I found a stay:  
He brought me out into freedom—  
Loosed me, because of his love.

Yahweh requites me after my right,  
Rewards me after my innocence;  
For Yahweh's ways I have kept,  
Nor wickedly strayed from my God;  
Yea, all his laws were before me,  
His decrees I "put not aside".  
Thus was I-blameless before him,  
And kept myself free from sin;  
So Yahweh has dealt with me after my right,  
And my innocence plain to his eyes.

With the good man thou shew'st thyself good,  
With the upright shew'st thyself upright;  
With the pure thou shew'st thyself pure;  
But against the perverted perverse.  
Yea, thou helpest afflicted souls,  
But humblest "the eyes of pride".

For thou art my lamp, O Yahweh,  
"My God" who lightens my gloom;  
Through thee I "break through a fence",  
Through my God I leap over a wall.  
The God—whose way is unerring!  
Faultless is Yahweh's word!  
A shield is he to all  
Who flee for refuge to him.

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<sup>1</sup>—<sup>1</sup> So many MSS; MT "Yahweh."

<sup>2</sup>—<sup>2</sup> MT "run on a troop."

<sup>3</sup>—<sup>3</sup> Additions, omissions and changes in accordance with the text of Ps. xviii.

For who is a God save Yahweh,  
And who a Rock but our God?—  
The God who "girds me with" might,  
And straightens out "my" way,  
Who lends me the feet of the hind,  
And sets me on " " lofty heights,  
Who trains my hands for war—  
My arms to bend the bow<sup>1</sup>!

Thou gav'st me the shield of thy help;  
Thy "condescension" makes me great.  
Thou extendest the stride of my feet,  
And my ankle-joints did not give way!  
I pursue and "overtake" my foes;  
And turn not back till they're slain:  
"I smite them: they "cannot" arise,  
They sink overpowered at my feet.

Yea, with strength for the fight thou dost gird me;  
Subduest before me my foes:  
My enemies thou turnest to flight;  
My haters by thee are consumed.  
They "cried"—there was none to deliver!  
To Yahweh—he answered them not!  
So I crushed them like dust of the highway<sup>2</sup>—  
Ground them down like mire on the streets

Thou hast saved me in strife with the heathen,  
Of nations thou "makest" me head;  
A people I know not shall serve me.  
Strangers come cringing before me,—  
At hearsay obey my command.  
Yea, strangers "bring me their gifts",  
And "trembling come forth" from their holds.

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<sup>1</sup> Luc.; MT + "of brass."

<sup>2</sup> Emendation; MT "earth."

<sup>3-3</sup> Emendation; MT "fade away."

<sup>o-o</sup> Additions, omissions and changes in accordance with the text of Ps. xviii.

Yahweh, the living One ! Blest be my Rock !  
Praised be the God ° ° of my help !  
The God who grants me revenge,  
And brings peoples under my sway ;  
Who °saves° me from °wrathful° foes,  
Exalts me above my rivals,  
From violent men sets me free.

Therefore I praise thee, Yahweh !  
'Mong the heathen I sing to thy name ;  
Who °so wondrously° helpeth his king,  
And crowns his anointed with favour :  
David and his seed for ever !

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